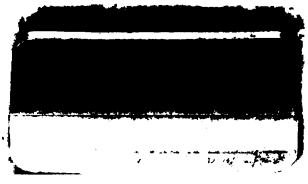

FROM MARX TO LENIN

BY

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"Intrinsically, it is not a question of a higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the lesser developed the image of its own future."

—Karl Marx in Preface to "Capital."

"We must abandon scientific prejudices that each country must absolutely pass through capitalist exploitation. The regime of Soviets, when there is a powerful proletariat uprising on a world scale, can be established in those countries in which the capitalist development has not attained any serious proportions."

—Nicolai Lenin before the Second Congress of the Communist International.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The object of this booklet is to clarify the main issues and problems of the present-day Socialist movement.

I approach the task with a full realization of its difficulties. The current of the Socialist movement since the outbreak of the war has been so swift and so replete with unexpected turns, as to make it well-nigh impossible to discern its meaning and tendencies in all cases. The Socialist movement of the pre-war period has broken down or lost vitality. The new movement has not yet crystallized. It is in the process of formation, and the violent clashes and hostile divisions within its ranks are but manifestations of that process.

Eventually the movement will be compelled to adjust itself to the new conditions and requirements, and the sooner the Socialists of all shades begin to analyze the grounds of their disagreements candidly and dispassionately, the sooner will the process of regeneration be accomplished.

Our first task, therefore, is to discover a sound basis for such an analysis, a generally accepted premise from which the discussion may proceed fruitfully.

Such a basis will be found in the common appeal to Marx. For Marxism is still the avowed creed of all contending Socialist camps, each claiming strict adherence to the doctrine and spirit of the theoretical founder of the modern Socialist movement and charging its opponents with a palpable departure from them.

The essence of the Marxian method of historical research is to look to material causes for the explanation of all vital social and political events. The sudden disintegration of the powerful pre-war Socialist movement, generally designated as the Second International, is undoubtedly such a historic event. It, too, must be understood on the basis of material facts and circumstances. To account for the world-wide division in the Socialist movement on the sole theory that certain sections of it have become "Social-Patriots" and traitors to the cause, while others have remained steadfast to the ideals of revolutionary Socialism, is to beg the question, because it furnishes no explanation of the reasons why some groups succumbed to the inroads of Social-Patriotism, while others resisted it.

Every great crisis in a revolutionary movement which puts its sincerity and courage to a sharp test will inevitably prove fatal to many of its leaders, and not infrequently the most violent and "uncompromising" types will show the largest percentage of desertions. The events of the last years have subjected

the Socialist movement to the severest trial in its history, and whole groups of leaders and followers have surrendered to the heavy pressure of the capitalist forces in practically every country. But this undeniable fact is one of the manifestations and symptoms of the breakdown of the old Socialist movement, rather than an explanation of its causes.

In a somewhat similar situation arising from the collapse of the revolutionary movement of 1848, Marx caustically sums up the shallowness of the liberal bourgeois analysis of its own failure in this language: "When you inquire into the causes of the counter-revolutionary successes, you are met on every hand with the reply that it was Mr. This or Citizen That who 'betrayed' the people, which reply may be very true or not, according to circumstances, but under no circumstances does it explain anything—it does not even show how it came to pass that the 'people' allowed themselves to be thus betrayed."[1]

Nor does the Moscow classification by "wings" (the Right, the Left, and the Center) shed much light on the causes and meaning of the divisions within the Socialist ranks. It is a thoroughly ideological attempt to measure the degree of "radicalism" of Socialist groups and individual Socialists. There always are and always will be sharp personal and temperamental differences in every large mass movement. Such

[1] "Revolution and Counter-Revolution," American edition, 1919, page 15.

differences exist within each group as between groups. They were very pronounced in the Socialist movement of all periods. Still the movement maintained itself as an organized unit, particularly in the international field, until the 1st day of August, 1914.

The Second International was split by two main causes, the war and the Russian Revolution. The differences between the Socialist parties in the belligerent countries created by the war have been largely attenuated with the cessation of hostilities. The revolution in Russia and the Soviet régime which it has established, have proved a more acute and lasting factor of Socialist disunion.

The Socialist world was not prepared for a social revolution in Russia. The event came to it as a startling surprise. It upset its theories and threw confusion into its ranks. The Russian Revolution was utterly out of keeping with the conception of social evolution which dominated the international Socialist movement before the war. It developed a complex of new social institutions substantially at variance with those prevailing or anticipated in other countries, and it is this divergence of concrete material and political conditions, rather than mere theoretical and temperamental differences that lies at the bottom of the heated discussions in the ranks of the present-day Socialist movement.

To avert misconceptions it may be stated at the outset that my attempted analysis of the specific

tutions of the Russian Revolution and the policies of the Soviet government are not intended as "criticism." The new social forms of Soviet Russia have been shaped by the inherent forces of the conditions and events which have given birth to the first Socialist republic. Its policies are still in the making. History has not yet recorded its final verdict upon their merits, and judged by the pragmatic test of immediate success, Communist Russia has had the best of the argument up to the present. Mistakes and excesses have undoubtedly been committed, but these are inevitable in great revolutions and of comparative unimportance in the long run. The Russian Communists have preserved and stabilized the Russian Revolution. Perhaps this could have been accomplished in the same way or better by other and less painful methods. But the latter is speculation, while the former is fact.

Chapter II

THE MARXIAN CONCEPTION OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The Marxian theory of social growth and change is essentially economic and evolutionary. It is based on the following main postulates:

1. In every historical period the prevailing method of wealth production and exchange constitutes the basis of society and determines its political forms and intellectual conceptions.[1]

2. Every social order is in a perpetual state of flux and change and eventually reaches a point in its development at which its political and social forms of organization become an obstacle to further growth. At that point a break occurs. The impeding political and social institutions are overthrown, and are replaced by new institutions adapted to the new needs. A social revolution is accomplished.

3. Conversely, so long as an economic system re-

[1] "In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily flowing from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch." Frederick Engels in Preface to "Communist Manifesto."

tains vitality it cannot be forcibly abolished. No social order can give birth to a new society before it is fully matured and has exhausted all its possibilities of growth and expansion. No phase of social development can be skipped over.[2]

4. All societies of advanced systems of wealth production invariably create antagonistic social classes, property owners and propertyless workers, the privileged and the subjugated. It is always the aim of the former to maintain the old order, as it is always in the interests of the latter to overthrow it. The clash of interests assumes the character of struggle between these classes, and the political victory of the subjugated class over the ruling class constitutes the outward form of the social revolution.

This universal and unalterable law of economic determinism is the key to the true understanding of the modern capitalist state and the guiding post to the coming Socialist society.

The capitalist régime has gradually evolved from the feudal state as the economic order rooted in agriculture gave way to the growing predominance of modern industries. It was marked by the political victory of the bourgeoisie over the class of the land-

[2] "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society." Karl Marx, in the Preface to his "Critique of Political Economy."

owing nobility, and was ushered in by the industrial revolution of England, and the great poltical revolution of France.

But in the rapid progress of its growth capitalist society, like all preceding social orders, creates the germs of its own destruction. The individualistic system of capitalism begets, develops and organizes social forces of production. As the initial phases of capitalist economy based on individual handicraft gradually grow into the modern system of large-scale production as the hand-tool of the old-time mechanic develops into the powerful steam or electrically-propelled machine; as the small workshop gives way to the gigantic factory; the stage coach to the railroad, the sailing vessel to the steamboat, the personal messenger to the post, telegraph, telephone and cable, all economic and political relations of the classes are radically revolutionized, and the foundation is laid for a new and higher social order.

Capitalism welds together the small and scattered productive units of a country into powerful consolidated concerns, and organizes industries on a large scale and planful basis. It thus makes it physically possible for the organized community to take over the operation of the industries as a social function.

The modern factory assembles large masses of workers under one roof and organizes their work on the principle of division of labor. It thus transforms the production of commodities from an individual

into a collective process and schools the workers in the art and habit of co-operation.

As the capitalist mode of production is unfolded and perfected, industrial units become ever more consolidated and concentrated. Independent capitalist enterprises steadily diminish in numbers, and with them diminish the independent capitalists.

On the other hand, the number of the wage earners increases with the growth of industry. Their ranks are reinforced not only by the influx from the village to the city, from the field to the factory, but also by the progressive displacement of small independent producers and traders, who are compelled to seek employment in the service of large capitalist concerns.

But what the capitalist class loses in numbers through the process of industrial concentration it gains in wealth and power through the same process. The more advanced a country is industrially, the more absolute, as a rule, is the economic domination of the capitalists, their influence over the government and press and other organs of political control. At the same time the material conditions of the workers grow more uncertain and precarious as their labor contract passes from the hands of many competing employers into those of one trustified or monopolistic corporate boss. Class antagonisms thus become more acute, and class struggles more embittered.

In this irrepressible and intensified class struggle

the strength of the workers is bound to grow at the expense of the privileged classes, not only because their steadily increasing numerical preponderance gives them an inherent physical and political advantage, but also because the process of capitalist development, by massing them together in industrial centers and around industrial establishments and forcing them into collective struggle against common oppression, almost mechanically unites and organizes their forces, develops in them the feeling of class consciousness and class solidarity, educates them to the ideal of working class control and trains them in industrial and political methods of struggle for the attainment of that ideal.

It is upon this growing physical, moral and intellectual strength of the workers in their struggle against the increasing oppression of the capitalist economic order that the ultimate triumph of Socialism is predicated.

Capitalist society is accomplishing its work in history and losing justification for further existence. It has borne and nurtured within its womb the infant of Socialism, who clamors to enter upon his inheritance. Socialism is the child of capitalism. Without capitalism there can be no Socialism.

This conception runs like a red thread through the works of Marx and Engels. It was at the bottom of all Socialist politics and tactics before the war.

Already in the Communist Manifesto the salient points of the doctrine are definitely outlined. After sketching the universal economic and political rise of the capitalist class upon the ruins of the feudal order, the authors of the classic document proceed to these conclusions: "A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange, and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.

* * * "The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

With the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows and it feels the strength more."

* * * "The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, make their livelihood more and more pre-

carious; the collisions between individual worker and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois, they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts."

* * * "This organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises again; stronger, firmer, mightier."

Twenty years later Karl Marx formulated this conception even more clearly and succinctly in the following famous passage from his Capital:

* * * "As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the laborers are turned into proletarians, their means of labor into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialization of labor and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers.

"This expropriation is accomplished by the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by the few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative forms of the labor-process, the conscious application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, and transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments usable only in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic régime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation, but with it, too, grows the revolt of the working class, always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourishes along with and under it. Centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst

asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."[3]

The indispensable conditions of a socialist revolution as understood by the Marxian school of Socialism may thus be summarized as follows:

1. A capitalist system of wealth production in a high state of development and concentration.

2. As a sequel, the prevalence of collective or "socialized" work in such industries.

3. A powerful class of capitalist magnates.

4. A large industrial working class constituting the majority of the population and suitably "disciplined, united and organized."

5. An acute, active and conscious class struggle between the capitalists and the workers.

None of these conditions was present in Russia in 1917.

The country was overwhelmingly agricultural with rare and isolated spots of industrial capitalism.

The bourgeoisie was neither large nor powerful, and was not in control of the government.

The industrial workers constituted less than one-tenth of the population; their class discipline was lax,

[3] "English Translation"—American edition, Chicago, 1908, page 836.

and their class organization, political and economic, quite undeveloped.

The struggle between the Russian bourgeoisie and workers was in the incipient stage, sporadic and relatively insignificant.

According to all accepted Marxian tests, Russia was entirely unprepared for a Socialist revolution.

Chapter III

MARX AND ENGELS ON RUSSIA

In spite of the universal applicability of his theory of social evolution it is asserted that Marx made an express exception in favor of Russia, and he is frequently and loosely quoted to the effect that the Socialist revolution may break out in Russia in advance of other countries.[1]

Both Marx and Engels always took a keen interest in the economic and political developments and the Socialist movement of Russia. Their main views on the latter subject were collated by Frederick Engels, and published as a separate chapter of a pamphlet entitled "Internationales aus dem Volkstaat" (Berlin, 1894).

The publication sheds full light upon the estimate of Marx and Engels of the possibilities of a Socialist revolution in Russia. But to enable the reader to grasp the full import of their expressed opinions a few preliminary words must be said about the character and theoretical foundations of the Russian Socialist movement in the days of Marx and Engels.

[1] See f. i. R. W. Postgate, "The Bolshevik Theory," N. Y., 1920, page 116.

Inspired by the desire to accomplish the Socialist revolution quickly in spite of the backward economic conditions of their country, the pioneers of Russian Socialism, mostly young and enthusiastic intellectuals, evolved a convenient Socialist theory of their own, known as "Narodnichestvo," an untranslatable term corresponding approximately to "populism." It was not Marxian, but specifically Russian. It reposed its hope not in the wage workers, but in the peasantry. Its starting point was not the capitalist system, but the village community.

The institution of the "village community" rests on a form of communal land holding. Under this system the village land belongs to the whole community, which distributes and redistributes it periodically among its members in accordance with their needs as determined by the size of the family and the number of its male working "hands." The peasant has no individual property in the land which he cultivates, he cannot alienate it or transmit it by inheritance.

The institution prevails in numerous countries in the earlier stages of agricultural development, and was in full operation in Russia before and after the emancipation of its peasants from serfdom in 1861. It was on this basis that the early theoreticians of Russian Socialism proclaimed the Russian peasant a Communist at heart and in practice, and reduced the task of the Socialist revolution to the extension of

the village community into a national system of communist production, freed from the economic exploitation of the land owning nobility and the political yoke of the tsarist régime. It was only in the beginning of the eighties of the last century, when the disappointing results of the communist propaganda among the peasants became increasingly obvious, and the institution of the village community itself showed definite signs of dissolution, that the Marxian school of Russian Socialism was founded under the leadership of George Plekhanoff. This school accepted the Marxian laws of economic evolution as valid for Russia as well as for other countries, pinned its hopes upon the development of capitalism in Russia, and transferred the propagandist center of gravity from the peasantry to the growing class of factory workers. The subsequently formed "majority wing" of the Russian Social Democracy (the Bolsheviki with Nicholai Lenin at their head) likewise accepted the Marxian concept.

In 1874, Peter N. Tkachoff, a Russian Socialist and adherent of the village-community theory, published a controversial "Open Letter to Mr. Frederick Engels," in which he set forth the conventional social-populistic views on the prospects of the Socialist revolution in Russia, including the following observation:

"We have no urban proletariat. This is admittedly true; but, on the other hand, we also have no bourgeoisie. * * * Our workers will have to combat only the political power—the power of capital is barely in

its inception with us. And you, my dear sir, certainly know that the struggle with the former is much easier than with the latter."

I quote the following instructive passages from Engels' reply:

"The revolution which modern Socialism seeks to accomplish is, briefly stated, the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and a reorganization of society through the removal of all class distinctions. That requires not only a proletariat, which is to accomplish this revolution, but also a bourgeoisie, in whose hands the social forces of production have developed to a point which enables the ultimate abolition of class distinctions. * * * The existence of the bourgeoisie is in one direction as much a prerequisite for the Socialist revolution as the proletariat itself. The person, therefore, who says that such a revolution is easier to accomplish because although such country has no proletariat it has, on the other hand, no bourgeoisie proves thereby only that he has yet to learn the A, B, C of Socialism." * * *

"Tkachoff asserts that the form of society for which the Socialist movement of Western Europe strives will be introduced in Russia even before we in the West will reach it—and that with social conditions in which the classes of the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie appear only sporadically and in a low stage of development. And it is claimed that all this is possible because the Russians are, so to say, the chosen people of

Socialism, and possess the artel (co-operative enterprise) and the communal property in land." * * *

"The system of communal land ownership in Russia has passed the period of its bloom and apparently approaches dissolution. Still the possibility undeniably exists that this social form may pass into a higher one. If it maintains itself until the conditions are ripe for such transformation, and if it thus proves itself capable of development in such a manner that the peasants will cultivate the soil not individually but collectively, it may be possible to bring about this transformation, so that the Russian peasants will not have to go through the transitory stage of individual farm ownership. This, however, can only happen if before the total dissolution of communal land ownership in Russia a proletarian revolution should be victoriously accomplished in Western Europe and should furnish to the Russian peasants the necessary conditions of such transformation, particularly the material conditions which he needs in order to bring about a revolution in his entire system of cultivation necessarily connected with such conditions. It is therefore pure nonsense for Mr. Tkachoff to say that the Russian peasants although 'proprietors' are 'nearer to Socialism' than the propertyless workers of Western Europe. Quite on the contrary. If there is anything that still may save communal land ownership in Russia and give it the opportunity to pass into a new live form it is a proletarian revolution in Western Europe." * * *

"How could the Russian community transform the gigantic forces of the capitalist production into collective property and instruments even before Capitalism has itself accomplished this revolution; how could the Russian village community teach the world to conduct large-scale industry for the collective benefit after it has already forgotten to cultivate the soil collectively?"

And again: "It is a historic impossibility for a lower stage in economic development to solve the riddles and conflicts which have sprung and can only spring from a much higher stage."

It will be noticed that while Engels rejects categorically and *in toto* the idea of Russian leadership in the international Socialist revolution, he admits the possibility of establishing a communist régime in Russia without the necessity of her passing through all phases of capitalist development. This possibility is, however, conditioned on two important premises: (1) that the institution of the village community survive long enough, (2) that a proletarian revolution be first successfully accomplished in Western Europe.

In a much discussed letter of Karl Marx to a Russian journalist written at the same period (1877), the author expresses the following somewhat cryptic opinion: "If Russia will continue to follow the path which it has chosen since 1861, it will lose the most beautiful opportunity history has ever offered to a people, only to go through instead all the fatal conditions of the capitalist system."

Marx does not here specify the conditions upon which Russia may avail herself of the "beautiful" historic opportunity, but there is no reason to assume that his views on the subject differed materially from those of Engels quoted above.

Several years later, when the heroic "Will of the People" had thrilled the whole Socialist world with a succession of brilliant and daring feats, and the revolutionary movement in Russia had assumed a more serious character, Marx and Engels, yielding to the general spirit and atmosphere of the time, made a larger concession to the possibilities of a Socialist revolution in Russia.

In a preface to Plekhanoff's Russian translation of the Communist Manifesto, they wrote, in 1882:

"Side by side with the rapidly developing capitalist swindle and embryonic system of bourgeois private property we find in Russia the largest part of the land in communal property of the peasants. The question is, can the Russian village community, this form of collective ownership of land already in a state of rapid dissolution, pass directly into a higher form of communist land ownership, or must it pass through the same process of dissolution which characterizes the historical development of the West? The only possible answer at this time is the following: If the Russian revolution will give the signal for a working class revolution in the West, so that both may supplement each other, then it is possible that Russian col-

lective land ownership may prove the starting point of communist development."

The authors here concede that the revolution may first break out in Russia, but its success is made dependent upon a simultaneous proletarian revolution in the West and upon the preservation of communal land ownership. Twelve years later (in 1894) Engels expressed the opinion that Russia had already missed her historic opportunity, and concluded that without a general victory of the modern industrial proletariat contemporary Russia cannot accomplish a Socialist transformation either by the road of the village community or by that of capitalism.

Chapter IV

THE NATURE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian revolution seemingly mocked the specific forecasts of Marx and Engels as it defied the generally accepted Marxian law of social evolution. It was neither preceded nor supplemented by a general working class revolution in the West. It did not spring from the village community. That institution had been rapidly and steadily declining until 1917. It did not succeed an outworn capitalist system. Capitalism occupied a comparatively insignificant part in the economic life of Russia. The Russian revolution owes more to the unusual conditions created by the war than to the normal course of the country's economic or political development.

The main factors of its success were:

1. The sudden collapse of the whole organization of national life.

2. The utter demoralization of the bureaucracy.

3. A weak and unorganized bourgeoisie.

4. An impoverished, war-weary, rebellious and desperate population.

5. An overwhelmingly large and land-hungry peasantry.

6. Millions of workers and peasants organized into an army and suddenly freed from military discipline—a liberated and armed people available for revolutionary service.

7. Spontaneously created but relatively strong and well-knit organizations of industrial workers in the large cities, who represented the only active and cohesive social force of the country.

8. A small but resolute group of Socialists trained in European theories of Socialism and ready to assume and to exercise leadership.

The early Socialist movement of Russia has been characterized as the "illegitimate child of Asiatic Russia and European Capitalism." From the point of view of the conventional Marxian historian the Russian revolution may be described as the illegitimate child of Asiatic Russia and European Socialism. It was not born in lawful Marxian wedlock, and this taint upon its birth has given rise to curious contentions in opposite Socialist camps.

The bolshevist theoretician sturdily asserts that the Russian revolution was accomplished in strict conformity and fulfillment of the Marxian formula. Thus the first congress of the Communist International, held at Moscow in March, 1919, boldly asserted with special reference to the Russian revolution that

"development has continued on the lines indicated" in the Communist Manifesto, and proclaimed: "We Communists, representatives of the revolutionary proletariat in different countries of Europe, America and Asia, now assembled in the powerful Soviet city of Moscow, both feel and consider ourselves to be the followers of and participants in a cause for which the programme (The Communist Manifesto) was drawn up seventy-two years ago."

On the other hand, some Socialist critics of the Soviet régime simply refuse to admit the "illegitimate" Russian revolution into decent Socialist society and at best accord to it the rank of a "middle-class" revolution. This pedantic attitude is based on the Marxian theory that a middle-class or bourgeois revolution must necessarily take place and run its course before a Socialist revolution can be successfully accomplished.

"The practical revolutionary experience of 1848-1849 confirmed the reasonings of theory, which led to the conclusion that the Democracy of the small traders must first have its turn, before the Communist working class could hope to permanently establish itself in power and destroy the system of wage-slavery which keeps it under the yoke of the bourgeoisie."

Thus Marx wrote as far back as 1852,[1] and the doctrine, frequently reiterated in the subsequent works of Marx and Engels, had become a fixed article of the

[1] "Revolution and Counter-Revolution," p. 186.

Socialist creed before the days of the Russian revolution.

In this connection it is worth recalling that the Russian Bolsheviki fully accepted this view, and it is significant for the suddenness and the unexpected turn of the Russian revolution that they adhered to the theory of orderly succession in revolutions until the very eve of the critical November days of 1917.

The last pre-war program of the Social Democratic Labor Party (dominated by the Bolsheviki) did not call for an immediate proletarian Soviet régime, but for a "democratic republic," to which it addressed the demand for the "confiscation of landlords' estates" in behalf of the peasants and an "eight-hour work day" as a concession to the industrial workers.[2]

In 1912, when this program was adopted, and practically down to the beginning of the Communist revolution, both Mensheviki and Bolsheviki believed that the coming revolution in Russia would be of a preponderatingly middle-class character, but while the former favored co-operation with the liberal sections of the bourgeoisie for the attainment of the revolution, the latter advocated a union with the peasantry against the landholding nobility and the industrial capitalists.

Even after the fall of the Tsar, when Lenin first

[2] "Vserossiskava Conferenzia Ross, Soz. Dec., Rab. Partii," Paris, 1912, p. 12.

formulated the plan to transfer the governmental power to the Soviets, L. Kameneff, one of the foremost exponents of Bolshevist policy, wrote in the Pravda:

"As for Comrade Lenin's general scheme, it seems to us to be unacceptable, in so far as it considers the bourgeois-democratic revolution as being completed, and counts with the immediate development of that revolution into a Socialist revolution."

And Lenin made haste to defend himself against the charge of advocating an immediate Socialist revolution in Russia in this language:

"But are we not exposed to the danger of falling into subjectivism, in a desire to "leap over" the unfinished (because it has not yet passed through the peasant movement) bourgeois-democratic revolution, in order to arrive directly at a Socialist revolution?

"If I had said 'No Tsar, but a labor government,' I would be running this danger. But I did not say that; I said something quite different. I said that, apart from a capitalist government, there can be no government in Russia outside the Councils of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power can now pass in Russia from Gutchkoff and Lvoff only to those Councils, *and the majority of them are precisely the peasants, the soldiers—the lower middle class* (to use scientific Marxian terms, based on the distinctions of classes, and not those of common parlance or legal vocabulary).

"I absolutely insured myself, in my Theses, against leaping over an unexhausted peasant—or, generally speaking, lower middle-class movement, against any playing at 'the conquest of power' by a Workers' Government, against any form whatsoever of a Blanquist coup; for I referred explicitly to the experience of the Paris Commune. Which experience, as is well known, and as Marx showed in 1871 and Engels in 1891, entirely precluded Blanquism and *efficiently guaranteed the direct, immediate and absolute rule of the majority* and the effective rôle of the masses only in proportion to the conscious activity of the majority."[3] (Italics mine.)

And again: "I not only do not 'count' with 'an immediate development' of our revolution into a Socialist one, but distinctly warn against such an expectation." * * *[4]

About six months after this was written a "Socialist Soviet Republic" was proclaimed in Russia under Lenin's leadership.

And it is idle caviling to dispute the Socialist character of the Russian revolution. A Socialist revolution does not mean the immediate establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth. It is only the political act of seizing the power of government in behalf of the workers and with the object of using it for the

[3] "Towards Soviets" by N. Lenin, English Translation, London, p. 12.

[4] Ibid., p. 16.

abolition of private ownership in the means of production and for the development of collective work and enjoyment.

The Russian revolution has taken possession of the government in the name of the workers. It has effectively expropriated private capitalist owners and has nationalized the greater part of the industries. It has also written into its program the socialization of the land. Measured by all practical tests it is therefore a Socialist revolution in character as well as intent.

If it has not come as a result of the course of historic and economic development outlined by Karl Marx, it has occurred through the working of another set of social conditions and forces, which have proved potent enough to create and maintain it. Its continued existence, year after year, in the face of almost incredible domestic difficulties and embittered foreign attacks, proves that we are not dealing with a mere freakish episode, but with a monumental historic event. This will remain true even if the Soviet government of Russia should not prove able to maintain itself indefinitely and should yield to another and substantially different form of government. The consistent Marxist should be the first to recognize it.

The Paris Commune, in its origin, social program and the composition of its government, was at least as much removed from the pure ideal of a modern proletarian revolution in the Marxian sense as the severest critics of Soviet Russia can fairly charge it to be.

It was confined to a single city, it maintained itself only a little more than two months, and was succeeded by a strong, vindictive and reactionary bourgeois government. Yet Marx did not haughtily disavow it. Underneath all its crudities and blunders he discerned "an essentially working-class government the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class."[5]

The "aberration" of the Russian revolution from the prescribed Marxian path of social development merely proves that Marx and his followers in the Socialist movement before the war failed to take into account the possibility of a world catastrophe of such unprecedented and unimaginable magnitude as the recent war and the cataclysmic political effects of the incidental breakdown of the international capitalist order.

[5] "Civil War in France," English translation by Belford Bax, N. Y., page 48.

Chapter V

THE TASK OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution represents a straight leap from an absolute and semi-feudal order to a political régime of working-class Socialism. The intervening stage of bourgeois democratic government, which Marxian theorists always considered indispensable, was simply passed over, for it surely cannot be seriously contended that the Lvoff-Kerenski government compressed within the eight months of its troubled existence a completed cycle of middle-class revolution.

The Russian experiment thus contradicts the accepted Marxian theory of political evolution. But does it also set at naught the more fundamental Marxian laws of economic development? By no means. Political institutions are after all primarily deliberate products of the conscious mind, even though they are bound to adjust themselves in the long run to the existing material situation. But economic conditions are physical and organic. Their development may be stimulated, but no radical change can be effected in their substance by legislative enactment or revolutionary decree.

The Russian revolution has nationalized the indus-

tries, such as they were. It has put a Socialist government in the place of the former capitalist owners, but it has not thereby changed their general character or state of maturity. Russia has a unique chance to develop her industries under working-class instead of capitalist auspices, which may accelerate the process and eliminate much of the suffering by which it was accompanied in other countries. But she cannot jump over the inevitable phase of economic development from small production to large scale industry if she is to continue on the road toward Socialism.

A Socialist or Communist society in the modern conception implies not only the common ownership of the tools of work but also the existence of a well-organized system of large-scale production of goods, a system that will abundantly supply all needs of the people in an advanced state of civilization. A primitive order of communal life based on scanty resources is not Socialism.

"Among savages and semi-savages," observes Engels in the pamphlet already quoted,[1] "there are frequently no class distinctions, and every people has passed through that state. We would not think of reverting to such a condition again, if for no other reason than because it necessarily gives rise to class divisions as the forces of social production develop. Only upon a degree of development of the social forces of production, which is very high for the con-

[1] "Internationales aus dem Volkstaat," page 50.

ditions of our times, does it become possible to increase production to such a point that the abolition of class distinctions will mark true progress and be of lasting duration without causing a standstill or even a recession in the social mode of production."

The immediate task of the Socialist government of Russia is to build up the industries of the country, and nobody appreciates the magnitude and urgency of that task more keenly than the Russian Communists themselves, who, particularly of late, have been concentrating their efforts on the development of a system of large-scale production.

N. Bukharin, one of the foremost Communist theoreticians, explains the necessity of that policy in the following simple and direct language:

"The future order is intended to relieve the workers of two misfortunes and evils. In the first place, from the oppression of man by man, from exploitation, from one man sitting on another man's neck. This is to be attained by casting off the yoke of capital, and taking their wealth from the capitalists. But that is not the only problem. We have also to free ourselves from the yoke of nature, to subject nature to our own wishes, in order to carry on production in the best, the most perfect manner. Only then will it be possible for each man to devote only a small part of his time to the production of necessary food, boots, clothing, houses, etc., and turn the remainder of his time to study, to art, to all the things that beautify human

life. The ancestors of present-day man, who lived at the semi-ape stage, were equal among themselves. But they led an animal existence because they had not subjugated nature; in fact, it was nature that had enslaved them. On the other hand, under capitalism, large-scale production has taught man to subdue nature, but the working-class live like working cattle, because the capitalists, owing to the existence of economic inequality, are sitting on their necks. What follows from this? From this follows that economic independence (equality) must be combined with large-scale production. It is not enough that the capitalists should go. It is necessary to establish production on the largest possible scale. All small and futile enterprises must die out. All work must be concentrated in the largest possible factories, works, farms. There must be a single working plan. The greater the area comprised in this single plan, the better. The whole world must finally become one great workshop, one enterprise, in which all mankind may work for themselves according to a single, stringently executed plan, without any employers or capitalists, with the best machines, and in the best working quarters. In order to give production a forward impetus we shall not only not be obliged to scrap the gigantic production which capitalism has left behind as its legacy. On the contrary, we shall have to increase it."[2]

[2] "Program of the Communists," Publication of American Communist Labor Party, page 14.

It will be noticed that in the above quotation, Bukharin does not limit the operation of the proposed system of large-scale production to purely industrial enterprises, but that he also extends it to "the farms." And rightly so. No ordered system of national economy can be organized without taking into account the vital field of agriculture. To secure the greatest possible yield of farm products with the least expenditure of human energy through the application of modern machinery and scientific methods; to relieve the hardships, bleakness and monotony of rural life, and to raise the tillers of the soil to approximately the same level of comfort, leisure and culture which the city workers enjoy or envisage, that has for decades been one of the most burning problems of the nations. It is of particular importance in Russia in view of the distressing backwardness of her agricultural methods.

The agrarian problem has always been a source of perplexity in the Socialist movement, which was made up overwhelmingly of industrial workers. International Socialism has, in fact, never formulated a comprehensive and generally accepted program of agrarian reform. The prevailing notion of agricultural organization in a Socialist commonwealth centers around the unit of the large-area farm, equipped with the most modern and scientific implements, owned by the community and operated co-operatively by shifts of workers, with ample provisions for rest and recreation. Rural life is to be made more interesting

and intellectual by the transfer of industries, particularly those more closely related to the products of the soil, from the city to the country, and the establishment of more and better schools, libraries and places of amusement.

The Russian Social Democrats, including the Bolsheviki, generally accepted this program, and the latter still adhere to it as an ultimate ideal. But the practical exigencies of the situation at the time of the revolution forced upon them a policy little related to the Socialist program.

The Russian peasants had received ludicrously inadequate land allotments upon their emancipation from serfdom in 1861, and their cry for more land grew in volume and vehemence with each advancing decade as their numbers increased and their land-holding remained practically stationary. After the fall of the tsarist régime their one demand was for the immediate partition of all crown lands and large private estates, and even before the November revolution they had begun to effect such partition on their own account in many parts of the country. The movement was spontaneous and irresistible and the Bolshevik revolution did little more than legalize and regulate the procedure.

The decree on "Land Socialization" officially promulgated on February 19, 1918, contains, among others, the following provisions:

"Art. 1. All property in land, underground wealth, waters, forests and living natural forces on the terri-

tory of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic is hereby abolished for all time."

"Art. 2. The land is hereby handed over for use to the entire laboring people without any overt or covert redemption taxes."

"Art. 9. The distribution of agricultural land among the laboring population is vested in the village, cantonal, district, provisional, regional or federal land departments of the soviets in accordance with their importance."

"Art. 12. The distribution of land among the laboring population shall be carried out on the principle of equalized labor in such manner that the combined normal unit of food and labor adopted to the historical system of land-tenure prevalent in each locality, does not exceed the labor capacity of each farming household and yet enables each family to live in adequate sufficiency."

Nominally the Russian land is thus socialized. The legal title to all of it rests in the community. The peasant is given the mere right of use. He cannot alienate or transmit it by inheritance. In actual practice, however, the peasant owns his newly acquired land as fully and unrestrictedly as he owns his original holding. He pays neither rent nor taxes to the government and does not recognize its superior title. It would be a very hazardous undertaking on the part of the soviet government to attempt to forcibly curtail

or to disturb the proprietary control of the peasant over his land.

The failure of the Russian revolution to socialize the peasants' land immediately cannot be taken as an abandonment of Socialist aims and methods with respect to its agrarian policy. Even Karl Kautsky, one of the severest Socialist critics of the Soviet régime, admits that in the Western countries also a victorious proletarian revolution would not attempt a policy of forcible interference with private peasant land ownership. "By no means," he declares, "do we demand that the proletariat as soon as it acquires power shall use it to expropriate the peasants and still less to confiscate their land." * * *

"The victorious proletariat has every reason to see to it that the production of food go on without disturbance. An expropriation of the peasants would throw this whole branch of production into mad disorder and expose the new régime to the danger of starvation. The peasants may therefore be reassured. Their economic indispensability will protect them against expropriation, entirely aside from the fact that the simplest rule of wisdom would militate against a policy which would provoke the enmity of a large section of the population. * * *

The victorious proletariat will have the means as well as the motive to aid the peasant in the technical improvement of his methods, to supply him with fer-

tilizer, cattle and perfected tools, and thus to increase the quantity of his product.

If we expect that this will not lead to a strengthening of small peasant economy, it is only because we assume that no measure of relief and support can avail to make the full benefits of the modern technique accessible to small peasant production, and that the peasants will therefore *voluntarily* abandon their individual form of production, which will prove an obstacle to their further social advances, as soon as the Socialist mode of production has been definitely established. The Socialist society will have every reason to help them in the transition to more advanced methods of production, because it will stand in need of an increase of food and raw material."[8]

The Russian Communists cannot be charged with lack of effort to stimulate the process of voluntary transition from individual to collective cultivation of the soil. They have made some beginnings in nationalized and co-operative farming; they are endeavoring to improve agricultural methods to the extent permitted by their crippled resources, and they carry on an extensive rural propaganda in favor of co-operative and communal land tillage.

Still there is a vital difference between the character and the effect of the proposed land policy of Western

[8] Karl Kautsky. "Die Sozialisierung der Landwirtschaft." Berlin, 1919, page 70, et seq.

Socialism and the policy forced upon the Russian revolution by the special conditions of that country.

While a victorious proletarian revolution in the West will probably not attempt to expropriate the individual land holdings of small peasants, it may proceed to nationalize immediately large landed estates already cultivated with the application of modern methods and operated by hired labor. The peasants of Western Europe are not land-hungry. It is not more land that they require, but relief from the exactions of capitalist mortgagees, lessor, warehouse, commission house and railroad, and better facilities for work. They do not demand the partition of large estates. The Communist revolution in Russia in dividing up the large estates among the small peasant proprietors not only deprived itself of all direct and indirect benefits of a strong nucleus of socialized land cultivation, but took a decided step backward in the realization of the ultimate agrarian program of Socialism by strengthening the institution of private land ownership.

That this policy was not adopted voluntarily, but as a distinct concession to specific Russian conditions which are not applicable to Socialist revolutions generally is too obvious for argument. In fact, it is freely admitted by the more candid spokesmen of Russian Bolshevism, and by none more clearly than Nicolai Lenin. "At the very moment of the October revolution," says the latter, "we effected an informal (a

very important and highly successful) political block with the petty bourgeois peasantry, having accepted *fully,* without a single change, the 'Social Revolutionary' agrarian program. That is, we effected an undeniable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we do not want to dominate them, but to come to an understanding with them." [4]

And again: "I draw your attention to the fact that these fundamental principles in the law (The Decree on Land Socialization) were laid down when the Communist party was not merely enacting its own program, but was also consciously *making concessions to those who in one way or another expressed the class feeling and the will of the 'middle peasantry.' We made and are still making concessions of that kind,* and we do so because the transition to the collective form of land holding, to communal tillage, to Soviet husbandry and communes is impossible all at once."[5]

The problem, while not specifically Russian, will present itself in somewhat milder form to a proletarian revolution in the Western countries, because in those countries the material conditions for collective tillage are more advanced. But the main point is that in those countries it will not be of the same acute and critical importance to the very existence of the Social-

[4] "Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder," London, p. 54.

[5] "The Land Revolution in Russia," Publication of Independent Labor Party, London, 1919, page 15.

ist régime as it is in Russia. In the more advanced countries of Europe, as in the United States of America, the center of gravity has definitely shifted from agriculture to industry. The factory system, with all its vast and intricate ramifications, dominates the economic and political life of the nation and supports the greater part of the people. When the workers secure control of the system their rule will be built on the broad and solid basis of majority interest. In a country like Russia, in which agriculture is the prevailing and overwhelming form of economic life, and urban industry is comparatively insignificant, a political régime built on the rule of the industrial working class is inherently as unstable as a pyramid poised on its apex. It could only maintain itself by special measures and concessions. These measures may have been inevitable and wise under the circumstances of the Russian revolution, but they sprang from the necessities of the special conditions and were bound to impress the form, methods and functions of the Soviet régime with their own peculiar stamp.

Chapter VI

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Socialist theoreticians of the period represented by the First and Second Internationals studiously avoided all discussion of the detailed form of organization and concrete policies of the proposed Socialist government. Not the methods of exercising governmental powers, but the means of acquiring them was on the order of the day. The "scientific" Marxian Socialist was satisfied to rest on the theory that when the revolutionary working class will be strong enough to "capture" the powers of government it will use them for the establishment of Socialism in such manner and by such means as the conditions of the struggle at the given time and place will determine. Beyond that he refused to speculate. In his famous letter of criticism of the Gotha program of the German Social Democratic Party, in 1875, Marx dismissed the subject with this terse sentence: "The program at this time does not have to deal with the period of transition (from capitalism to Socialism) any more than with the nature of the future state in the Communist Society,"[1] and for forty years there-

[1] "A Propos D'Unité," Paris, 1901, p. 37.

after a similar attitude was maintained by his followers.

All attempts to outline the structure and functions of Socialist government were decried as "utopian" and ridiculed as "music of the future." (Zukunftsmusik.)

The Russian revolution, immediately preceded by the short-lived Socialist government of Finland and followed by the equally short-lived Communist experiment in Hungary and the brief period of Socialist political power in Germany and Austria, has made the question one of concrete, practical and immediate importance.

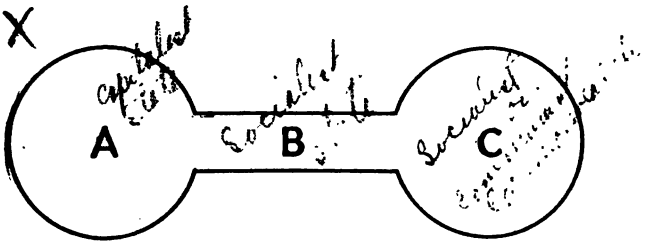
What is the historic form of a Socialist government?

Every attempted answer to the question must take into account the fact that political institutions are not viewed by Marxian students as static forms, nor as definitely demarcated historical periods. The Socialist political revolution marks the conscious beginning of the process of transformation into Socialism, but only its beginning.

The revolution, which is the working-class conquest of the *political* power, leaves the capitalists for the time being in possession of the *economic* power. On the day of the revolution the capitalist class still owns all essential means and instruments of wealth production and distribution. It manages the financial, industrial

and commercial institutions of the country and controls the whole intricate and delicately interwoven economic life of the people. The transfer of all industries from private capitalist ownership into communal property and public management; in short, the break-up of capitalism and the building up of a pure Socialist order, calls for a series of planful and fundamental industrial and political changes. Such changes will, of course, not be undertaken by the capitalist class. They can only be brought about by the workers. In order to accomplish them the workers must be in control of the government machinery and their control must continue until the task of socialization of the industries has been fully performed, all economic class divisions have been abolished, the working class itself has ceased to exist as a class, and the working-class government has given way to the classless administration of the Socialist régime. The consecutive stages of development roughly succeeding each other may be regarded from different points of view and characterized according to the angle from which they are viewed.

Considered merely in their historical sequence, the period preceding the Socialist revolution may be termed the period of capitalism; the period of transformation ushered in by the revolution is commonly designated as the "transitional" period, while the one established by the complete socialization of the industries is designated as the period of Socialism or Communism.



Thus, if we assume in the above figure that the open circle A represents the Capitalist system and the open circle C, the perfect Socialist régime, the corridor B, leading from one to the other, represents the period of transition.

The three historical periods under discussion may also be regarded from the point of view of their political functions. Thus viewed, circle A may be designated as the Capitalist State, Corridor B as the Socialist State, and circle C as the Socialist or Communist Commonwealth.

Here a word of explanation of the terms employed may be useful.

In the Marxian literature on the subject the word *State* is not used in its popular and loose interpretation as synonymous with *organized society,* but in the strictly technical sense as the organized force by which the government defends its existence and exercises the power of repression. In this sense it is not the

body of the people organized in a political community that constitutes the state, but the governmental machinery for the enforcement of law or the will of the sovereign (L'état c'est moi)—the bureaucracy, army, police, courts, jails, etc., a machinery capable of use not only independently of the people, but even against them.[2]

And since every government represents the economic interests of the dominating class, the state is necessarily its organ for the repression of everything hostile to such domination.

"The state," says Frederick Engels, "is an organization of the exploiting classes for the preservation of the existing methods of production and more particularly for the purposes of forcibly maintaining the exploited classes in the condition of dependence inherent in such methods of production (slavery, serfdom, wage labor)."[3]

And Karl Marx sums up the character of the capitalist state in the following language:

[2] This conception is by no means peculiar to Marxian Socialism. The coercive power of the state as the sovereign, its indispensable power to enforce laws and levy taxes, have been recognized by many bourgeois economists and sociologists, including Leroy-Beaulieu, Charles Benoist, Jeremy Bentham, Franklin H. Giddings, and J. W. Burgess. But the exactness or inexactness of the definition in no way impairs the validity of the Marxian argument. The coercive power of government undoubtedly exists and its operation is not effected by its label.

[3] "Herrn Eugen Dühring's Umwälzung der Wissenschaften." Stuttgart, 1894, page 301.

"At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class-antagonism between capital and labor, the State power assumed more and more the character of national power of capital over labor, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism."[4]

The transitional or Socialist state is no exception to the rule. It, too, represents the organized repressive force of government. But the government which it serves is the working-class government. Hence the function of the Socialist state is to maintain the proletarian government and to repress the forces of surviving capitalism aiming at its overthrow.

Only when all classes and class struggles have been abolished and there is no more need of a coercive instrument for the domination of one class by another, the repressive organs of the government, the army, police, etc., become useless. The state disappears. Government hereafter is a classless administration of the business of the whole people by their chosen representatives, a "commonwealth," not a "state."

"By actually becoming the representative of the whole society, the state renders itself superfluous. As soon as there is no longer any class in society to be held in subjection, as soon as the class rule and the class struggle for individual existence based on the

[4] "Civil War in France," page 40.

modern anarchy in production are removed, and with them also the resultant clashes and excesses, there is nothing more to repress, nothing requiring a special repressing power, a state. The first act in which the state really appears as the representative of the whole society—the seizure of the instruments of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state with social relations becomes superfluous in one field after another, and, as it were, falls asleep. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and processes of production. The state is not 'abolished.' It dies."[5]

Emphasizing the social forces behind the political forms of the successive historical periods under discussion, it may also be said that the first (circle A) represents the domination of the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class, the third (circle C) the ideal classless society of equals, while the intermediate period (Corridor B) represents the domination of the working class. Marx and Engels have at different times described the transitional period of working-class political domination as the "Rule," the "Power" or the "Sway" of the workers. They have also characterized it as the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*[6] and the Bolsheviki

[5] Frederick Engels, Ibid., page 302.

[6] For an interesting account of the evolution of the term see "Creative Revolution" by Eden & Cedar Paul, N. Y., 1920, page 134, et seq.

have chosen the latter phrase to describe the political character of the present revolutionary régime in Russia.

Considerable discussion has arisen about the accuracy of the use of the word *Dictatorship* in connection with the political rule of the working class in the period of transition. Etymologically and historically the propriety of the term is fairly open to doubt. Karl Kautsky inclines to the belief that Marx had not intended to use it in the accepted and literal sense. For, says he, taken literally, dictatorship means "the sovereignty of a single person, who is bound by no laws. A sovereignty which is distinguished from a despotism by being regarded as a passing phase, required by the circumstances of the moment, and not as a permanent institution of the state."[1]

In his answer to Kautsky, Lenin denies that dictatorship even literally means the sovereignty of a single person (although he would, I believe, find it difficult to support his denial by historical proof), but admits the substantial correctness of the other parts of Kautsky's assertion. Lenin suggests the following as a proper Marxian definition of dictatorship: "Dictatorship is an authority relying directly on force, and not bound by any laws. The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is an authority maintained by the proletariat by means of force over and against the

[1] "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," London, page 43.

bourgeoisie, and not bound by *any* laws."[8] (Italics mine.)

The phases of the definition which both Kautsky and Lenin accept, i. e., that dictatorship is an authority not bound by *any* law, clearly shows that the term is not technically applicable to the rule of the proletariat. A working-class revolutionary régime is not bound by the laws of the overthrown bourgeoisie. It may change, abolish or simply disregard them. It may and does adopt its own code of laws suitable to its requirements, either by legislative enactment or by revolutionary decree. But it proceeds on the basis of its own laws, not in defiance of *any* laws. Every important act of the revolutionary Soviet government of Russia rests on the direct or indirect sanction of some law or decree. To say that a class in power is not bound by any law because it can make and change the law at pleasure is to render the term perfectly meaningless, for every ruling class has that power, whether the form of government is that of a dictatorship or a "democracy."

But after all the etymological justification for the use of a name or term is only of academic interest. For practical purposes a word acquires the meaning which those who use it choose to give it. The dictionaries are replete with terms of perverted etymological origin. Marx and Engels have employed the

[8] "The Proletarian Revolution," London, page 15.

term "dictatorship" in application to the period of working-class political rule, the Socialist movement has adopted it, and the Russian revolution has emphasized and popularized its use. Regardless, then, of etymological proprieties, the stage of social development which is introduced by the Socialist revolution, and which from certain points of view is called the "Transitional Period" and the "Socialist State," is from a somewhat different point of view also designated as the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." In this sense also the period preceding the Socialist revolution, which we know as Capitalism or the "Capitalist State," may be characterized as the "Dictatorship of the Capitalist Class," and the cycle of social evolution may be envisaged as (A) Capitalist Dictatorship, (B) Proletarian Dictatorship, (C) the classless commonwealth of equals.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, contrary to widespread popular assumptions, is not the antithesis of Democracy. In the Marxian view the two institutions are by no means incompatible.

The bourgeois textbook writers and lexicographers are in the habit of defining democracy as government by the people, or as a political system in which government is directly exercised by the people collectively, and even Karl Kautsky asserts that democracy "signifies the rule of the majority, and also the protection of the minority, because it means equal rights and a

share in all political rights for everybody, to whatever class or party he may belong."[9]

Technically the definition is correct. Democracy is theoretically a system of political and legal equality. But in concrete and practical operation it is false, for there can be no equality, not even in politics and before the law, so long as there is glaring unequality in economic power. So long as the ruling class owns the workers' jobs and the press and the schools of the country and all organs for the molding and expression of public opinion; so long as it monopolizes all trained public functionaries and disposes of unlimited funds to influence elections, so long will the equal franchise be largely illusory. So long as the laws are made by the ruling class and the courts are presided over by members of that class; so long as lawyers are private practitioners who sell their skill to the highest bidder, and litigation is technical and costly, so long will the nominal equality before the law be a hollow mockery.

In a capitalist régime the whole machinery of democracy operates to keep the ruling-class minority in power through the suffrage of the working-class majority, and when the bourgeois government feels itself endangered by democratic institutions, such institutions are often crushed without compunction. We need not limit ourselves to the summary suppression

[9] "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," page 133.

of established political and legal rights during the period of war "emergency" for proof of this assertion. The abolition of the rights of free speech and assemblage through the device of "martial law" in connection with important industrial struggles, the suppression of workers' publications and unseating of duly elected working-class representatives in peace time, afford ample illustration of its truth. Democracy does not secure "equal rights and a share in all political rights for everybody, to whatever class or party he may belong." It only allows free political and legal play for the existing economic inequalities. The democracy of every social régime is adjusted to the purpose of maintaining that régime. Democracy under capitalism is thus not general, abstract democracy, but specific *bourgeois democracy,* a democracy within the bourgeoisie or as Lenin terms it—democracy *for* the bourgeois.[10]

Similarly working-class democracy, i. e., the system of political and legal rights granted by the transitional Socialist state, is also a class institution. It signifies equality within the ranks of the producers, democracy for the working class. It is frankly a limited form of democracy, but it is a higher form than the democracy of the bourgeoisie, because it means the actual rule of the majority over the minority, while the latter represents the rule of a minority over the majority.

[10] "The Proletarian Revolution."

In the technical sense democracy is also a form of political power and presupposes a class of the people against whom such power is wielded. "Democracy," says Lenin, "is a *state* which recognizes the subjection of a minority to the majority, that is, an organization for the systematic use of violence by one class against the other, by one part of the population against another." [11]

Only when all class distinctions will disappear in the pure Socialist society, will actual equality, political and economic, prevail, and it will presumably not matter much to the members of that happy society whether their commonwealth will be technically styled a democracy or not.

[11] "The State and Revolution," London, 1919, page 85.

Chapter VII

THE FUNCTION OF COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP

The Socialists of the pre-war period read the phrase of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat with the emphasis on *proletariat* rather than on *dictatorship*. Not the change in governmental methods, but the substitution of a new ruling class for the old was considered the essence of the Socialist state.

The term "proletariat," defined by Marx and Engels as "the class of modern laborers, who having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live," [1] was broadly construed to embrace the whole class of wage workers constituting the great bulk of the population in all countries of advanced industrial development. "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority," asserts the Communist Manifesto.

The proletarian régime thus conceived represents a homogeneous rule, whose political power rests on the solid foundation of numerical and physical pre-

[1] In the annotations to Samuel Moore's translation of the "Communist Manifesto."

ponderance as well as on its intellectual and idealistic appeal.

The Russian revolution in its very inception faced a different, more difficult and contradictory situation. As a political revolution designed to conquer and to hold power it depended upon the lasting support of the majority of the population. As a Socialist revolution it purposed to establish the rule of the proletariat. But the proletariat comprised only a small minority of the people, hence it found itself dependent for the maintenance of its rule upon a permanent alliance with a more numerous, non-proletarian class. Such class was discovered in the "poor peasants," whose economic status was defined as "semi-proletarian." A revolutionary alliance between workers and peasants was made possible by the specific Russian condition of acute peasant land hunger and by a tacit compromise under the terms of which the land was divided among the peasants in individual property, while the industries were taken over by the urban workers in collective ownership. With the accomplishment of the revolution and its two-fold object for the contracting parties the union between the industrial workers and small peasant proprietors rested on a precarious and unstable foundation. It lacked in social homogeneity and economic cohesion. The psychology and intellectual level of the peasant are different from those of the city worker and their material interests are often antagonistic. Unless and until both industry and agriculture are

fully socialized the reciprocal relations of the two classes are those of producer and consumer. It is in the interest of the farmers to obtain the largest possible quantity of manufactured goods for the least possible quantity of food and raw material, and vice versa.

It therefore became necessary to evolve a cementing and unifying force for the two classes in power, and such force was found in the Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Russia plays a unique part in the revolutionary government of the country. Composed of some 600,000 members, including practically all Soviet officials, civil and military, national and local, it constitutes the most conscious, active and reliable organized support of the revolution. To the Communists fall the hardest and most perilous tasks, but in return they are given practically unlimited authority. The power of the Communists grew gradually, almost imperceptibly. To-day it is complete and avowed. The Second Congress of the Communist International (Petrograd-Moscow, July 19-August 7, 1920) frankly proclaimed the superiority of the party over all official governmental organs and institutions.

"The Proletarian Revolution in Russia," recites the Platform-Resolution adopted by that Congress, "has brought to the foreground the basic form of labor dictatorship, viz., the Soviet. In the nearest future the following division will establish itself: *First, the party;* second, the Soviets; and third, the productive unions. But the work both in the Soviets and in the

revolutionized productive unions *must be invariably and systematically directed by the party of the proletariat, i. e., the Communist Party.*"[2] (Italics mine.)

And again: "The Communist Party is the *chief* and the *basic* instrument for the liberation of the working class." (Italics mine.)

The superiority thus accorded to the Communist Party was explained and defended by G. Zinovieff in a speech before the same Congress, from which I quote the following excerpts:

"It is true that sometimes some people like Kautsky say: 'You have in Russia a dictatorship not of the working class, but a dictatorship of a party.' They think that this is a reproach to us. Not at all. We have a dictatorship of the working class, and consequently also a dictatorship of the Communist Party. The dictatorship of the Communist Party is simply a function, a sign of the expression of the dictatorship of the working class. Just what is our party? One should not confuse it with other parties that are composed of lawyers. Into our party enter 600,000-700,000 of the best workmen; that is the advanced detachment of the proletariat. And it is clear that the business of

[2] I quote from a rather strange authority—a pamphlet entitled "The Second Congress of the Communist International as Reported and Interpreted by the Official Newspapers of Soviet Russia," published by the State Department at Washington, D. C. Notwithstanding the "authoritative" character of the publication the reported documents bear intrinsic marks of genuineness.

the working class is being conducted by its best representatives. Thus there is established simultaneously a dictatorship of both proletariat and Communist Party. The right of control over various organizations belongs to the party. That is as it should be in time of proletarian revolution."

While Zinovieff still palliates and accords equal rank to the "proletariat and Communist Party," the more outspoken Bukharin writes in the Pravda of August 3rd, 1920:

"But if it is clear that revolution is civil war, that it is an armed struggle of the workers with the bourgeoisie, then it is also quite clear that the working class, like a belligerent country, must have a closely united vanguard, with military discipline, with a military staff to direct the struggle, and *all must be subordinate to this staff*. Such a vanguard is the party."

The functions of the Communist Party, as the controlling organ of the Russian revolution are stated in the Platform-Resolution as serving "equally the interests of the economic, the political, and the cultural struggles of the working class as a whole."

The "Theses" submitted to the congress contain a more direct hint of one of the practical uses of the Party:

"The history of the Russian revolution shows us, at a certain moment, the Soviets going against the proletarian party and helping the agents of the bourgeoisie.

* * *

"In order that the Soviets may fulfill their historic mission, the existence of the Communist Party, strong enough not to 'adapt' itself to the Soviets but to exercise on them a decisive influence, to force them not to adapt themselves to the bourgeoisie and official social democracy * * * is necessary." [3]

The Communist Party is predominantly a party of industrial workers. The practical effects of its hegemony are: (1) within the political partnership of the proletariat and the peasantry to establish the rule of the former. (2) Within the ranks of the proletariat to assure the domination of the Communists.

"The Communist Party is that lever of political organization by means of which the most advanced part of the working class directs the mass of the proletariat and semi-proletariat along the right road." [4]

Thus the dictatorship acting in the name of the whole working-class and all poor peasants in practice resolves itself to the rule of an organization composed of 600,000 industrial workers of one political persuasion.

The exercise of controlling governmental influence by a political party is by no means peculiar to Russia (in fact all modern governments are party governments). But the vital difference between the modern

[3] Quoted in Bertrand Russell's "Bolshevism: Practice and Theory," N. Y., 1920, page 73.

[4] "Platform-Resolution of Second Congress of Communist International."

working-class party in the West and the Communist Party of Russia is that while the former is often practically synonymous with the working class and is always open to all of it, the Communist Party is a close corporation, a class within a class.

The exclusive character of the party is admitted and justified officially in the following paragraph of the Platform-Resolution of the Communist International.

"So long as the governmental authority has not been conquered by the proletariat, so long as the proletariat has not established its rule once for all and has not guaranteed the working class from the possibility of a bourgeois restoration, so long will the Communist Party have by right in its organized ranks *only the minority of the workmen.* Up to the time of the seizure of governmental authority and *during the period of transition* the Communist Party may, in favorable circumstances, exercise *undivided* ideological and political influence upon all the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata of a population, *but it cannot bring them together in its ranks* in an organized manner. Only after the proletarian dictatorship will have deprived the bourgeois of such powerful weapons of effective influence as the press, the school, the church, the parliament, the administrative apparatus, etc., only after the final defeat of the bourgeois social order will have become evident for everybody (i. e., when there will be no more need of political parties, M. H.), only then

will all or practically all the workers begin to enter the ranks of the Communist Party." (Italics mine.)

In the scheme of the Russian dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Communist Party thus performs the rôle of political guardian of the whole proletariat and the poor peasantry. It is the rule of a minority exercised, it is true, in the name and in the interest of a majority, but it is the minority and not the majority which is permitted to interpret and formulate such interests.

The peculiar functions and composition of the Communist Party and its supreme political rule are thus one of the main characteristics of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the Russian conception. What are its other distinguishing features?

On this most important point the theoreticians of the Russian revolution are not in complete agreement with each other, nor always consistent with themselves. The preponderating weight of Bolshevist opinion seems to hold that the determining features of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat aside from the controlling influence of the Communist Party are the Soviet as its political organ and form and the "terror" (in the widest significance of the term) as its weapon.

This conception is based on the historical experiences of the Russian revolution. The form and policies of the latter were shaped partly by the specific economic and political conditions which prevailed in Russia after

the war and partly under the pressure of the counter-revolutionary plots of the Russian bourgeoisie and the armed attacks and economic blockade of foreign capitalist powers, which were directed against it not because it was Russian but because it was a *proletarian* revolution.

It is of the utmost importance to the international Socialist movement to ascertain, if possible, to what extent these forms and policies were necessitated by conditions peculiar to Russia and to what extent they are inherent in every régime of proletarian dictatorship.

Chapter VIII

SOVIETS OR PARLIAMENT?

The Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued on September 1st, 1919, proclaims that: "The *general* unifying program at the present moment is the recognition of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat *in the form of Soviet power.*" (Italics mine.)

The Platform-Resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International characterizes the Soviet as "the principal form of the dictatorship of the proletariat furnished by history," and declares that "the Proletarian revolution in Russia has brought to the foreground the *basic* form of labor dictatorship, viz., the *Soviet.*" (Italics mine.)

In his "Program of the Communists," Bukharin writes:

"Up to the present time, up to the Russian Revolution of 1917, much has been written about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. But no one knew, exactly, how the dictatorship would be realized. The Russian Revolution shows the form the dictatorship will take: *this form is the Soviet republic.* For this reason the ad-

vance guard of the International proletariat is inscribing on its banners the slogan: A Soviet Republic, all power to the Soviets. For this reason our problem is the formation of a Soviet power *the world over.*" [1] (Italics mine.)

And again:

"Above all, the Russian Revolution solved the question of the form of the dictatorship. It solved the question as to what should constitute the power of the proletarian state. The Soviets, the Soviet power—that is the form which was born of our Revolution. In the beginning, one could still think, perhaps, that the Soviets were a specifically Russian product. But the further experiences of Western Europe showed that this was the *general form rooted in the fundamental conditions of the war of the working class against the bourgeoisie.* And it is for just that reason that all who advocate the dictatorship of the proletariat must support the Soviet power." [2] (Italics mine.)

Zinovieff, speaking at the Halle convention of the Independent Socialists of Germany, as late as October, 1920, expresses the same thought with equal vigor:

"Mere lip services in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat," he says, "we hear often enough. But was it not Crispien who declared in Moscow, speaking

[1] Page 25.

[2] From Article: "What is New in the Russian Revolution," *Soviet Russia Magazine,* N. Y., February 12, 1921.

to Lenin: 'Well, is the dictatorship anything new? Or was it already set forth in the Erfurt Programme?' * * * A dictatorship of the proletariat in the sense of the Erfurt Programme means nothing. * * * A dictatorship in that sense will, of course, be supported by all Mensheviki. But now the question is about the incarnate dictatorship of the proletariat, about the form, which we have not sucked from our fingers, but about *the historic form of the dictatorship of the proletariat that the international working class has created, i. e., about the Soviets.*"

And while he seems to qualify the assertion by the succeeding sentence: "If the German working class will create another form, we shall acclaim it with joy, for we have always said everything must not be as it is in Russia and the workers in other countries will perhaps do better than we," the statement must be interpreted as a challenge rather than a concession, for he adds immediately: "But up till now the Soviet government is the historically developed form of the dictatorship of the proletariat." [3]

On the other hand, Lenin in his "Letter to American Workingmen" (New York, 1918) describes the Soviet as "a *particular* form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," and the Executive Committee of the Communist International in its Reply to the Independent

[3] "U. S. P. D. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Halle," Berlin, 1920, page 155.

Labor Party of England takes a somewhat non-committal stand on the subject.

"Our English comrades," they say, "in their sixth question wish to know what other forms of Soviet government are possible in other countries. We can say nothing definite. It is necessary to admit theoretically the possibility of variations of forms depending upon the varying economic structures of the different countries in a state of revolution. It must, however, be said that the experience of the development of the world revolution until recently has given no indications of the realization of this theory. It is the opinion of the Communist International that it is not its concern to indicate the exact form in which revolution is to develop."[4]

Is the Soviet the "historically developed form" of the Socialist state or is such a state likely to function with equal efficiency in a modified form of parliamentary régime?

Parliament as it exists today is entirely unsuitable as an instrument for the transformation of the capitalist state into a Socialist Commonwealth. While the institution antedates the rule of the capitalist class, the latter has in the course of its long political reign so radically changed its functions and forms that the modern parliamentary régime serves primarily to defend

[4] "The I. L. P. and the Third International," London, 1920, p. 44.

and perpetuate the rule of the bourgeoisie. In capitalist society the economic life of the people, the management and operation of the industries, and the distribution of goods is left almost entirely to private initiative. The government is but little interested in that vital sphere—its functions are prevalently political. It regards the members of the community not in the light of producers and consumers of goods or performers and users of services, but in their common and abstract aspect of "citizens." Accordingly representation in parliaments is based on political lines and geographical constituencies.

The modern capitalist state furthermore has the twofold task of preserving the outward appearances of political equality and at the same time securing the domination of the ruling class, and each outstanding feature of its parliamentary régime is primarily designed to accomplish a part of the delicate performance.

The system of "checks and balances," which is the pride of parliamentary institutions, particularly in the countries of Anglo-Saxon civilization, is a cunningly devised scheme to check the will and power of the masses, i. e., the working class, and to throw the political balance in favor of the classes in power.

By the operation of that system the "Lower House" of parliament, elected by popular vote, is in practice often reduced to impotence. The "Upper House" is devised as a "conservative" and restraining control over

the elected representatives of the "sovereign" people. Its members are hereditary aristocrats as in England, or governmentally-appointed dignitaries as in Italy, or elected on the basis of indirect suffrage as in France, or by unequal constituencies as in the United States, and in most countries they are given co-ordinate legislative powers with the popular chamber.

If a "radical" measure happens to pass the double barrier of the two chambers by dint of special popular clamor, the executive power frequently has the right to veto it, and the measure so vetoed cannot be repassed except upon an increased majority vote, which virtually puts the legislative power in the hands of the conservative minority. In the United States even such measures as have passed both houses with executive sanction or over an executive veto, do not always acquire legal effect. They may be set aside by the courts as invalid or unconstitutional. Laws of vital national importance have thus been nullified by five out of nine judges of the United States Supreme Court.

But even more paralyzing than the Upper House, the executive veto, and the judicial power of nullification, is the parliamentary separation of legislative and executive functions. In the United States the division of governmental functions into executive, legislative, and judicial, is open and complete. The President is the Chief Executive and the heads of the departments of the government are appointed by him as his personal advisers. The Senate, or Upper House, is given the

right of confirming or rejecting such appointments, but the House of Representatives, the Lower House, is neither consulted about the choice of cabinet ministers nor does it control their policies and official actions. In most other countries of parliamentary régime the members of the cabinet are in theory selected by and responsible to the Lower House. In actual operation, however, the executive departments are practically independent of parliament. The Prime Minister, although appointed by the Chief Executive, is as a rule the choice of parliament, but the remaining members of his cabinet are selected by him. Parliament has no opportunity to consider them on their individual merits. It must accept all or none.

To exercise effective control over the ramified organs of practical public administration, the members of Parliament have neither time nor opportunity, and still less the requisite training. The average M. P. elected on a political-party platform by a mixed geographical constituency, comes into the house utterly unprepared to deal with the detailed and complex problems of practical administration.

And yet it is the executive department that exercises the most important functions of government. It is supreme in the sphere of international affairs, it shapes the country's diplomatic relations and practically determines its policies of war or peace. It is the physical instrument and visible expression of the government and, above all, it directs and controls the all-important

"apparatus of the state," the bureaucracy, the army, the police, etc.

It is therefore quite obvious that the revolutionary working class, in the words of Marx, "cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." [5]

The functions of a Socialist state are preponderatingly economic. Its main object is to socialize the industries and to supervise and direct their operation when socialized. Its principal governing organ must be adapted to that purpose. It must include to a large extent trained men of practical industrial experience. It must deal with the people primarily as a community of producers and consumers in their variegated needs and interrelations, and not as a uniform aggregation of citizens.

But even in a Socialist state the economic functions are not exclusive, for there always remains a large and important sphere of governmental activities, such as foreign relations, public health, education, justice, etc., which may properly be considered as political in character. A Socialist state must, therefore, develop suitable administrative organs to take care equally of the economic and political interests of the people. Representation must be occupational as well as geographic.

The necessity of such cardinal changes in the con-

[5] "Civil War in France," page 39.

stitution of parliament for the purposes of working class government has always been recognized by the Socialist authorities of all schools. Even such conservative writers as Sidney and Beatrice Webb advocate the establishment of a dual governing body in the British Socialist state—the Social Parliament and the Political Parliament, the former concerned with all matters economic and cultural, and the latter confined to tasks of a purely political nature.[6] The principal contribution of the English school of *"Guild Socialists"* is its minute analysis of the general political interests of the modern community as "neighbors," and its special economic interests as "producers" and "renderers of service," or "consumers" and "enjoyers," and its efforts to evolve a scheme of appropriate governmental organs to correspond to these different interests. Underneath the "Guild" and the "State," the "National Industrial Guild" and "Parliament," and similar formulæ of the new school[7] lies the same fundamental conception of the dual function of communal life, economic and political, and the effort to evolve a system of representation according to their respective importance in the Socialist state.

Whether the economic and political representatives

[6] "A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain." By Sidney and Beatrice Webb, London, 1920.

[7] For a full exposition of the theories of Guild Socialism the reader is referred to "Self-Government in Industry," London, 1920; "Social Theory," N. Y., 1920, and "Guild Socialism," N. Y., 1920, all by G. D. H. Cole.

are to be comprised within one body or whether they are to constitute two or more separate "chambers"; whether they are to be bodies of equal and co-ordinate powers, with or without an appropriate common organ for reconciliation of possible conflicts, or whether the "Political" Parliament is to be subordinate to the "Economic" or "Social" Parliament, are open questions, but there is complete agreement among all Socialist authorities that the preponderatingly political character of modern parliament cannot be carried over into a Socialist state.

Furthermore, a Socialist régime, representing a proletarian majority of the people, will have a clear interest in placing the vital executive functions of the government in the control of the people through their direct representatives; to abrogate all parliamentary methods and customs which serve to thwart such control, including the separation of executive and legislative functions, and to break up the capitalist "apparatus of state."

This was one of the principal lessons which Marx drew half a century ago from the experience of the Paris Commune.

Characterizing the latter as "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor," the founder of the modern Socialist philosophy describes its operation in the following language:

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the city, who were responsible to their constituents and subject to recall at all times. The majority of its members were naturally workingmen, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing as the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times recallable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of the other branches of the Administration." [8]

Thus if a Socialist régime is to retain the institution of parliament at all, it would modify its forms and methods in at least these salient features: It would introduce occupational representation, abolish the "Upper House" and the veto power, place the practical work of administration in direct control of parliament and make its members actively participate in such work. It would turn all state organs into responsible agencies of the working class government, and provide for a system of recalling representatives at all times.

The Soviet as such is also a form of representative government based upon a system of popular election. The Russian system excludes from the suffrage em-

[8] "The Civil War in France," English translation by E. Belfort Bax, page 43, revised from the German original.

ployers of labor and other recipients of workless income as well as persons engaged in certain specific non-productive and non-favored occupations. With the exception of these excluded categories all Russian citizens, men and women above eighteen years of age, are entitled to vote.

The supreme organ of government is the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in which the urban inhabitants are represented on the basis of one delegate for every 25,000 *voters*, while the rural population has one seat for every 125,000 *inhabitants*. Representation is in no case direct, but it is more direct for the urban workers than for the rural population. The former choose deputies to the town or city congress, which in turn elects direct representatives to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, while the inhabitants of the village are separated from such elections by three successive bodies of widening circles: the village, rural (volost) and provincial Soviets.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets meets semi-annually. It elects a Central Executive Committee of 200, which is "the supreme power of the Republic" between meetings of the All-Russian Congress. The Central Executive Committee is theoretically in continuous session, and its members are actively employed in the different departments of the government. The Committee elects the Council of Peoples' Commissars, a body corresponding to the Cabinet in other countries. All elections are subject to the right of recall.

Such is the general structure of the Soviet government. In what features does it differ from parliament reorganized in accordance with the Socialist conception?

The distinction most frequently sought to be drawn is that the suffrage under the Soviet régime is limited to producers.

"What is the main difference between a Parliamentary Republic and a Republic of Soviets?" asks Bukharin, and he answers his own query promptly and categorically: "The difference is that *the classes which do not work have no vote* in the Soviet Republic and take no part in its government." At another place he observes: "The Constituent Assembly differs from the Congress of Soviets because in the Constituent Assembly sit not only the workers and peasants, but also the bankers, landholders and capitalists." [9]

This view seems to accord with the oft-reiterated Communist doctrine that the capitalist class must be "deprived of its political rights" throughout the period of proletarian dictatorship. And still it seems very doubtful that the limitation of the suffrage can be considered the cardinal distinguishing feature of the Soviet.

Socialists authorities have never favored disfranchising any class of the population even in the period

[9] "Program of the Communists," pages 21 and 22.

of proletarian dictatorship, except as an extraordinary and temporary measure during acute struggles with counter-revolutionary forces. Karl Marx recorded with approval that "nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to replace universal suffrage by hierarchic institutions," [10] and the Bolshevist theoreticians are by no means agreed in advocating the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie in all cases and for all times. Nicholai Lenin, for instance, rejects the theory in no uncertain manner. In his polemic with Karl Kautsky, he observes:

"The restriction of the franchise is a specific national question, and not one relating to dictatorship in general. One must study the question of the restriction of the franchise in the light of the specific conditions of the Russian revolution and the specific course of its development. * * * But it would be rash to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will, all or for the most part, be accompanied by a restriction of the franchise in the case of the bourgeoisie. This may be so. In fact, after the war and after the experience of the Russian revolution it will probably be so. But it is not absolutely necessary for the establishment of a dictatorship. It does not enter as a necessary condition in the historical or class conception of dictatorship."

And again:

[10] "Civil War in France," p. 46.

"As I have pointed out already, the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie does not constitute a necessary element of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Nor did the Bolsheviks in Russia, when putting forward the demand for such a dictatorship, long before the November revolution, say anything in advance about the disfranchisement of the exploiters. This particular element of the dictatorship was not born according to a plan conceived by some party, but grew up spontaneously in the course of the fight." [11]

The Soviet form of government does not necessarily mean an exclusively working-class constituency, nor does it imply a system of occupational representation, as is often asserted.

Under a system of occupational representation the industries of the country are represented in the national governing body by delegates chosen by and for such industries. Under such a system the railroad workers, miners, metal workers, tailors, shoemakers, etc., would each have their own qualified representatives to look out for the interests of the particular industry as part of the general scheme of national industrial administration. The Russian electoral system embodies no such principle. It is based wholly on geographical units, the town, the village, volost, and province. True, in the towns the vote is cast in factories and trade unions, but that is done merely for

[11] "The Proletarian Revolution," pages 39 and 58.

practical reasons of convenience. The voter in the factory or trade union is not limited in his choice of delegate to a member of his own craft, and when the delegates chosen in the "primaries" assemble for the election of a representative to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, they represent a body taken from numerous vocations who choose the "best man" on the basis of general political considerations. Neither the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, nor the Central Executive Committee, nor the Council of Peoples' Commissars are made up in whole or in part of representatives of special industries or occupations as such.

The other features of the Soviet structure most frequently dwelt upon, the combination of legislative and executive functions, the responsibility of representatives and officials, their election for short terms, and the right to recall them at any time, are, as we have seen, features by no means incompatible with parliamentary institutions. In fact, short periods of office, and control of elected representatives through the instruments of the referendum and the recall are political measures which have originated in the camp of liberal middle-class reformers and are in full bloom in many parts of the United States as well as in Switzerland and elsewhere.

The determining feature of the Soviet is its indirect and elaborate system of voting, which operates to give to the industrial working class minority political preponderance over the peasant majority.

This result is achieved in several ways. First, the peasantry is frankly given a smaller representation in proportion to its numbers than the town workers. The urban residents are given one delegate for every 25,000 *voters,* while the rural population is represented by one deputy for every 125,000 *inhabitants.* This assumes a ratio of 1 voter to 5 inhabitants, i. e., a total vote equal to 20% of the population. Considering that both sexes enjoy the franchise, that the right to vote begins at the age of eighteen years, that the disfranchised bourgeoisie is numerically insignificant and that all residents are citizens entitled to vote, it seems safe to conjecture that no less than 40% of the Russian people have the right to vote in villages as well as in towns. On this basis 125,000 inhabitants contain at least 50,000 voters and the peasant representation is thus cut down one-half in comparison with that of the urban population. In all likelihood, however, the voting portion of the population is much higher than 40%.

The town worker is further favored by dual representation in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, for the town Soviet elects delegates to that body directly and also sends representatives to the provincial Soviet, who participate in the latter's elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

But perhaps the most important practical result in the direction of suppressing peasant representation is achieved by the process of successive sifting and elimination inherent in the Soviet system of elections.

Otto Bauer has pointed out this process and analyzed its working with great clearness.

"The mass of Russian peasants is still practically unorganized," he argues, "they are unschooled and uninterested. If the state does not molest them in their villages, they do not care by whom and how the state is governed. Only small minorities of the rural population show a livelier interest in general political problems and greater political activity. The system of indirect representation upon which the Soviet constitution rests, has the purpose and effect of permitting only the politically active minority to express itself. The election of the village Soviet, which administers the village affairs, may still interest the whole peasantry. The choice of delegates of the village Soviets to the rural Soviets already interests the dull mass of peasantry in a considerably lesser degree. But the industrial workers who have come back to the village, and the peasants who during the war had been in the town as soldiers and had there been drawn into the revolutionary labor movement, understand that the rural Soviets are the cells which form the body of the Soviet state. They evince a keener interest in the elections than the mass of peasantry, and since they are more active and better talkers than the others, they carry the elections without difficulty. Thus the rural congress already presents a different spirit than the village soviet; the active, revolutionary, proletarian minority is more prominently in evidence than in the village

soviet. This process is carried further in the elections from the rural soviets to the provincial congress. The average peasant is not interested in the provincial congress; what does he in the village care for the distant provincial capital? It is the active revolutionary minorities who send the delegates to the provincial congress. There they meet with the representatives of the town soviets, accept their spiritual leadership and furnish them the votes for the elections of delegates from the provincial soviet to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. That is why the provincial soviet as a rule does not send to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets representatives of the dull, illiterate and conservative peasant mass, but members of the urban proletariat and of the village minorities led by them. There they are joined by the direct representatives of the town soviets. Thus the rule of the urban proletariat in the Congress is assured."

The indirect system of Soviet elections plays the same rôle in the sphere of practical politics as the Communist Party in the field of propaganda and moral pressure—it preserves the hegemony of the industrial worker over the peasant.

That the system works in the direction indicated is proved by the overwhelming preponderance of the industrial workers and their intellectual spokesmen in all determining organs of the Soviet Government, the Council of Commissars, the Central Executive Committee and the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

It is obvious that the Soviet constitution was thus formulated in response to the special exigencies of the Russian revolution. Is there any reason to assume that it will be uniformly adopted by the victorious proletariat in other countries?

Similar conditions will, most likely, produce similar results. A Socialist revolution in the Balkan countries, for instance, or in Poland or in the Russian border states, is quite apt to adopt a government largely modeled upon the Russian Soviet plan. In countries of western civilization, in which the proletariat has grown to larger numerical strength and the whole population, including the rural, has attained a higher degree of political maturity, the form of government of the Socialist state will be determined by the circumstances under which the revolution will occur, the extent to which it will be influenced by the Russian example and the strength of parliamentary traditions in the country. According to whether the one or the other of the last mentioned elements will prevail the new Socialist government may take its starting point in the parliamentary or Soviet system. But the difference will be largely one of name and not of substance. A Socialist government in a country of Western civilization can no more adopt the essentially Russian features of the Soviet than it can continue the essentially bourgeois features of parliament.

Chapter IX

VIOLENCE AND TERROR

The Russian Revolution has brought to the foreground another important question—the rôle of force in the Socialist movement.

The Socialists of the pre-war era assigned but a secondary part to force as a factor in the social revolution.

In his famous controversy with Edward Bernstein, Karl Kautsky stated the Socialist position in this language:

"The conception of revolution is not to be treated in the police interpretation of the term, in the sense of an armed rising. A party would be mad that would choose the method of insurrection on principle so long as it has at its disposal different, less costly, and safer methods of action. In that sense social democracy was never revolutionary on principle. It is so only in the sense that it recognizes that when it attains political power it cannot employ it for any purpose other than the abolition of the mode of production upon which the present system rests." [1]

[1] "Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm," Stuttgart, 1899, page 181.

This was written in the early days of "revisionism," when Kautsky was the recognized spokesman of the radical wing of international Socialism. It undoubtedly represented the general Socialist attitude on the subject.

The armed struggles into which the Russian Revolution was forced in defense of its achievements, and the brutal violence with which the Socialist Revolution of Finland and Hungary were put down by the capitalist forces in those countries, have led the exponents of the new Communism to revise the accepted Socialist attitude on the subject of force. While they do not, of course, advocate violence for the sake of violence, there is an unmistakable tendency in their speeches and writings to lay a growing emphasis on the factor of force. Not only do they proclaim the absolute inevitability of violence in the Socialist Revolution as an historical rule or forecast, but they insist upon including this theory in the every-day propaganda of Socialism.

Thus Lenin writes: "The necessity of *systematically fostering among the masses* this and only this point of view about violent revolution (its inevitability) lies at the root of the whole of Marx's and Engels' teaching, and it is just the neglect of such propaganda and agitation both by the present Social-Chauvinists and the Kautskian schools that brings their betrayal of it into prominent relief." [2]

[2] "The State and Revolution," page 25.

And Kameneff supports this view with the following argument:

"To move towards a seizure of power, not hoping to hold it, *and not preparing the conditions for holding it,* is simply foolhardiness; to recognize the necessity for the proletariat conquering power, and to doubt the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat, *to refuse to instruct the workers in this direction*—means consciously to prepare the betrayal of the cause of Socialism." [3] (Italics mine.)

Neither Lenin nor Kameneff nor any other Bolshevist authority stops to analyze the conditions and phases of the Socialist movement in which it becomes possible or proper to preach to the workers the alleged inevitability of violence or to "prepare the conditions" for holding power. And yet such an analysis must be made for the sake of avoiding confusion.

The complete cycle of the Socialist movement may be divided into three main stages; the preparation for the struggle to achieve power, the seizure of power, and defending the conquest of power—the pre-revolutionary, the revolutionary, and post-revolutionary periods of struggle. Of these the first stage is the longest and the most diversified in character and degree of maturity. It embraces all phases of the organized Socialist movement, from its inception as a mere in-

[3] "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," London, 1920, p. 12.

strument of propaganda through the successive periods of organization and struggle to the point of development into a political force of recognized importance. It includes the entire process of Socialist growth from infancy to maturity, a process which in the countries of greatest Socialist strength, has taken from forty to fifty years.

The test of Socialist progress in each country is the measure in which the masses of the workers rally to the support of the movement; the extent, spirit and consciousness of the class struggle. The process of Socialist growth may be described as *quantitative,* where, as in most countries of continental Europe, the organized labor movement is from its inception rooted in Socialist thought, and the prime Socialist problem is the physical increase of that movement. Or it may be designated as *qualitative,* where, as in the Anglo-Saxon countries, the organized labor movement has attained to large dimensions, but lacks in clarity of class-consciousness, which the Socialists must endeavor to supply. In the countries of the former type the chief task of Socialism is organization, in the latter it is propaganda. But whether the immaturity of the Socialist movement is primarily physical or intellectual, it is clear that there is no sense or justification in "systematically fostering among the masses" the view of the hypothetical necessity of violent revolution at this preparatory stage. Not the temper of the Socialist revolution nor its physical aspect, but the preliminary

questions of its very desirability and feasibility, are then before the workers. The propaganda of violence as a present method or even as a prospective necessity under such conditions has always and rightly been rejected by Marxian Socialists. Violence as a species of "propaganda by deed" and premature revolutionary risings of workers are leaves from the book of Michael Bakunin, not Karl Marx.

It is only when the Socialist movement has developed to a point of strength and maturity at which it can successfully challenge the political rule of the bourgeoisie, when the objective and subjective conditions for a Socialist revolution are present, that the question of force or violence acquires a practical significance.

Must a Socialist revolution be accomplished by force? In discussing the question I am, for the time being, confining myself to the moment of the revolution, the act of capturing the powers of government.

The Communist authorities are unanimous and emphatic in answering the question in the affirmative.

"The substitution of a proletarian for the capitalist state is impossible without a violent revolution," categorically asserts Lenin.[4] Bukharin propounds the doctrine that "every revolution means using force against the former dominators," and proclaims the slogan: "Overthrow the imperialistic governments by armed uprisings."[5] Zinovieff defines civil war as "a

[4] "The State and Revolution," page 25.
[5] "Program of the Communists," pages 16 and 77.

function of the class struggle." [6] The Platform-Resolution of the Communist International declares that the class struggle inevitably transforms itself into civil war and that "the proletariat must resort to armed uprising," [7] and Kabakchieff, the Bulgarian delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International, reporting for the Committee on Constitution, lays down this sweeping principle:

"Only by an uprising, by the creating of a class army, and by the decisive, irreconcilable armed struggle can power be wrested from the hands of the exploiters, and the yoke of the capitalist order thrown off." [8]

The hypothesis that at the decisive moment the ruling capitalist classes in the different countries will not surrender to the proletariat without a physical struggle has always been accepted as reasonable by the Socialists of the Marxian school. The new elements which Communism has introduced into the theory is the dogmatic certainty of the inevitability of violence and the tendency to consider it in the light of an offensive rather than defensive weapon.

Marx and Engels have on the whole, and particularly in their earlier writings, envisaged the social revolution

[6] "Protokoll über die Verhandlungen, etc., in Halle," page 164.

[7] "The Second Congress of the Communist International, etc.," pages 89 and 90.

[8] Ibid., page 64.

as a violent struggle, although they admitted possible exceptions for some countries. But they never considered the element of force as an independent, constructive factor in the making of the revolution. Force may be "the midwife of every old society when it is pregnant with a new one" as Marx puts it, but the midwife is entirely impotent to bring a healthy child into the light of the world before it has been conceived and fully developed within the mother's womb.

Marx and Engels furthermore were confined almost entirely to aprioristic reasoning on the subject. They had no historic examples of concrete Socialist revolutions upon which to base valid empirical conclusions about the nature and psychology of such revolutions. The only instance of a proletarian uprising known to them was the Paris Commune, which can be compared only remotely with a modern Socialist revolution.

Within recent years, however, there have been several distinct cases in which Socialists have secured the power of government in their countries, and no scientific theory of revolution can to-day afford to leave out of account these valuable experiences.

In chronological order Finland was the first country in which the Socialists acquired political predominance. The conquest of power was secured in the first instance through a purely parliamentary victory. In the general elections of 1916, the Socialist party of Finland secured 103 seats in the Diet out of a total of 200. A coalition cabinet was formed which was presided over by Oscar

Tokoi, a Socialist, with the other portfolios equally divided between Socialists and non-Socialists. It was this diet under Socialist leadership that proclaimed the independence of Finland on July 18th, 1917. The Kerensky government of Russia, acting in concert with the Finnish bourgeoisie, refused to recognize the validity of the Finnish declaration of independence, dissolved the diet and ordered new elections. The Socialist and labor organizations refused to recognize the legality of the new elections and of the bourgeois government based upon them. On January 27th, 1918, they proclaimed a general strike, drove out the new government and constituted a revolutionary Socialist government under the title of Provisional Government of the Peoples Republic of Finland. The rising was accompanied by little physical violence.

The inception of the Bolshevik revolution, in Russia, November 7th, 1917, is also to be traced to what may be termed a parliamentary victory, the securing of a majority in the Workers' and Soldiers' Council by the Bolsheviki. The Provisional government was abolished by a decree of the "Military Revolutionary Committee" of the Petrograd Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who assumed the reins of government.

Comparatively slight resistance was made to the transfer of power, and the new government was able to record with satisfaction that "rarely has less blood

been spilled, and rarely has an insurrection succeeded so well." [9]

The short episode of Socialist power in Germany was preceded by mild outbreaks of revolt in the navy and by a one-day general strike. The revolution itself was carried through with almost bureaucratic formality. On November 9th, 1918, William II abdicated in compliance with the majority demand of the Reichstag. On the same day the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, voluntarily transferred his office to the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert, and Philip Scheidemann proclaimed from a window of the Reichstag building the establishment of a republic with an all-Socialist government. On the 11th day of November a Council of Peoples' Commissars with the functions of a cabinet of ministers was constituted with three representatives of the Majority Socialists and an equal number of Minority Socialists. The death toll of the revolution was limited to a few persons killed in the course of minor riots incidental to demonstrations, on the 9th day of November.

The Austian revolution was to a large extent a replica of the German. Upon the deposition of the Hapsburg dynasty on October 30th, 1918, the Diet proclaimed a republic and organized a provisional Council of State under Social-Democratic leadership. The transition was entirely bloodless.

[9] John Reed, "Ten Days That Shook the World," N. Y., 1919, p. 85.

The Socialist revolution in Hungary, March 24th, 1919, came to the workers of the country largely as a voluntary, and it may be added, fatal gift of the coalition government. The heavy peace terms of the Allied government and the starvation blockade inaugurated against the country together with the disquieting effects of the growing popular unrest induced the cabinet of Karolyi to abdicate "in favor of proletarian dictatorship" as an act of mingled surrender, spite and defiance.

The Paris Commune was to a large extent an incident of the Franco-Prussian war. In the defeat of French arms the Second Empire under Napoleon III was overthrown. The new republican government of Thiers sitting in Versailles did not yet have time to establish itself in power. The bulk of the bourgeoisie of Paris had fled in anticipation of the siege and the workers practically had the city to themselves. They also had the armed force of Paris, the National Guard, which had been organized during the war and was overwhelmingly proletarian, The humiliation of defeat, the sufferings of the war and the siege of 131 days, made the Parisian workers restive and rebellious. The latent antagonism between them and the Versaillian forces of the bourgeoisie came to a head when the latter attempted to capture the artillery of the National Guard on March 18th, 1871. The attempt was frustrated; a general municipal election was held on March 26th, and the Paris Commune was proclaimed on March 28th. The change of government was accomplished without bloodshed.

Of course, the precedents of these revolutions do not offer any guaranty for a peaceful "seizure of power" in future proletarian revolutions. The revolutions have in all cases occurred under extraordinary circumstances directly or indirectly prepared by war. But it must be borne in mind that social revolutions generally are quite apt to happen under unusual conditions, when the power of resistance of the ruling class is at least temporarily weakened. To assert the absolute inevitability of violence in the seizure of political power by the working class in the face of all historical experiences is at least somewhat rash.

Another question arises about the necessity of force to hold the political power conquered in a proletarian revolution. Here history tells a different tale.

The French Communards failed to realize the overshadowing and vital importance of the military defense of their government. Instead of burying their political differences and organizing all their forces and resources, so as to meet the attacks of their opponents by a strong, unified and disciplined resistance, they wasted precious time on academic discussions and factional controversies. And while the leaders of the proletarian insurrection talked, the wily chiefs of the bourgeois counter-revolution were busy preparing for action. After a number of preliminary skirmishes with varying military luck, the army of the Versaillese, reinforced by large numbers of military prisoners, whom Prussian yunkerdom had released for that purpose,

succeeded in entering Paris on the 21st day of May. A stubborn but unequal struggle of eight days ensued, and the last heroic defenders of the workers' republic were defeated. The bourgeoisie was enthroned once more, and the orgy of bestial revenge with which the guardians of "law and order" celebrated their victory knew no limits.

"When the struggle was over," records Lissagaray, the eloquent historian of the Commune, "the army was transformed into a huge platoon of executioners. More than 5,000 prisoners, who had been rounded up in the neighborhood of Pere la Chaise, were taken to the prison of La Roquette. A chief of batallion stood at the entrance and viewed the prisoners. Without addressing a single question to them he commanded "right" or "left." Those ordered to the left were instantly shot." [10] It is estimated that no less than 20,000 workers were thus summarily executed in the first days of the bourgeois restoration, while about 14,000 were subsequently condemned by court martial to death, exile or prison.

"To find a parallel for the conduct of Thiers and his bloodhounds," says Karl Marx, "we must go back to the times of Sulla and the two triumvirates of Rome. The same wholesale slaughter in cold blood; the same disregard, in massacre, of age and sex; the same system

[10] "Geschichte der Kommune von 1871," Stuttgart, 1894, page 351.

of torturing prisoners; the same proscriptions, but this time of a whole class; the same savage hunt after concealed leaders, lest one might escape; the same denunciations of political and private enemies; the same indifference for the butchery of entire strangers to the feud. There is but this difference, that the Romans had no mitrailleuses for the wholesale despatch of the proscribed, and that they had not "the law in their hands," nor on their lips the cry of "civilization." [11]

The Finnish leaders of the Socialist revolution were by no means unmindful of the counter-revolutionary danger. They organized a Red Guard, composed of the flower of Finnish labor, as disciplined, determined and efficient a body as ever took the field for a good cause. If all they had to overcome were their own bourgeoisie, the Finnish workers would undoubtedly have remained victorious. But the international solidarity of exploiters proved too strong for them. The "White Guard" of the Finnish bourgeoisie was supported with arms and ammunition from Sweden and other countries and reinforced by regiments of trained German soldiers. The rebellious proletariat of the small country succumbed to the superior international force of capitalism, and capitalism took bloody vengeance. The reign of "white terror" inaugurated by the triumphant Finnish bourgeoisie was cold, cruel and thoroughgoing. Over 100,000 men, women and children were jailed; 15,000 workers were summarily exe-

[11] "Civil War in France," page 69.

cuted and 15,000 more died of starvation. The Socialist and labor movements of the country were outlawed, their papers suppressed and their headquarters turned over to the White Guard.

The Bolshevik government of Russia in the early days of its existence gave comparatively little thought to the defense of the revolution. The regular army was demobilized, and the only armed force upon which the revolutionary proletariat could rely consisted of a few ill-organized volunteer detachments of workers. Capital punishment was abolished, and the opposition was allowed full freedom of speech and press. This period of "rosy illusions" and "sentimental youth," as Kameneff terms it, lasted about six months. In the spring of 1918, appeared the first signs of active counter-revolutionary plots and these grew steadily in extent and seriousness. The sporadic attempts of the Russian bourgeoisie to set up opposition governments in one part of the country and in another would not have been serious if they had not been actively supported by the powerful governments of the Entente and by a series of artificially stimulated wars on the part of several border states. The Russian revolution did not succumb to the attacks because favorable conditions afforded it the time to organize an effective defense. The Russian bourgeoisie was weak, weaker than the bourgeoisie of any other important country in Europe. Standing alone it had neither the resources nor the capacity to organize a successful counter-revolution.

The foreign capitalist governments had just gone through the severest war in history. They were exhausted and their populations were war weary and restive. They could not and dared not enter into open and extensive warfare against Russia. The tremendous size and comparative economic self-sufficiency of the country palliated the effects of the blockade and protected it from effective occupation by hostile forces.

Besides the revolutionary government of Russia took energetic measures of defense upon the first sign of danger. In April, 1918, the Red Army was formed, and the organization was steadily improved and increased until it could successfully meet all armed attacks, while strenuous measures of political repression were taken to cope with counter-revolutionary propaganda. It was the timely organization of the Red Army and the prompt suppression of counter-revolutionary plots that saved Soviet Russia.

The experiences of Germany and Austria contribute but little to the study of post-revolutionary struggles. The revolutions in these countries found the people stunned by defeat, apathetic and demoralized, while the Socialist movement, particularly in Germany, was disunited and discouraged. The Socialists accepted power in a spirit of half-heartedness. They had no desire to hold it against substantial opposition, and made no preparations to defend it. They could neither maintain union in their own ranks nor hold their following in succeeding elections, and political power slip-

ped out of their hands as quietly and unostentatiously as it had come to them.

The leaders of the Hungarian Soviet republic also neglected to take energetic measures for the defense of the revolution. During the four months of their power they lived in a sort of a fool's paradise, relying largely upon the good will of the people for the safety of their régime. While a Red Guard and Revolutionary Tribunals were organized in outward imitation of the Russian model, the institutions were altogether inadequate and ineffective.

The invasion of hordes of Roumanian forces gave the embittered bourgeois of the country the long-hoped for opportunity to wreak bloody vengeance upon the revolutionary proletariat. They overthrew the Soviet government and inaugurated a reign of terror unparalleled in bloodthirstiness and bestiality.

Thus the experience of all proletarian revolutions shows that while the capitalist class, stunned and demoralized by the sudden and irresistible advent of the revolution, may for the time being surrender without resistance, it may be expected after the first period of surprise to recover its class morale and muster its scattered forces for a counter-attack. The counter-revolutionary struggle of the bourgeoisie begins after the successful proletarian revolution. As a rule, it has the full and active support of international capitalism. It is continuous, embittered and unrelenting, and woe to the rebellious workers if it finally succeeds.

In the historical instances before us it has not been the revolutionary proletariat that employed violence in the overthrow of the capitalist government. It was the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie that resorted to methods of violence in its efforts to overthrow the organized government of the workers. The force used by the revolutionary government of the workers to maintain itself in power was in all cases a defensive, not an aggressive force.

But whether such force is defensive or aggressive in its origin and character is after all a question of only academic importance. It is abundantly clear that a proletarian régime must at all times maintain an efficient and adequate organization to protect its conquests, and that it must be particularly alert and determined in the early period of its existence, when counter-revolutionary capitalist attacks are likely to be most frequent and dangerous.

What is the measure and extent of force required for the maintenance of the working-class rule or proletarian dictatorship?

When a capitalist government feels itself secure it relies upon the ordinary instrumentalities of its police and courts to put down all sporadic revolts against its authority. When such revolts assume more threatening proportions the government substitutes the stringent rule of martial law for the normal civil régime, and unceremoniously curtails or abolishes the established political rights of its opponents. Martial law in

intensified form and extended application becomes government terrorism—white bourgeois terror.

A working-class government is actuated by the same law of self-preservation. Normally it can afford a greater degree of toleration of political and class opposition than a capitalist government, because it is more securely rooted in the interests of the "immense majority" of the people. But when it is actively attacked it must defend itself with all power at its command, and when its existence is seriously endangered by counter-revolutionary movements creating a virtual state of civil war, it must resort to extraordinary measures of defense, military and political. It is under such circumstances, and such circumstances only that the proletarian dictatorship finds itself forced to institute the measures and organizations for summary repression which constitute the essence of revolutionary terror. It goes without saying that the régime of "terror" is in all cases a passing phase and disappears when the conditions which have produced it have been successfully overcome.

This conception of the rôle of terror in the proletarian dictatorship was generally held by the Socialists of the Marxian school, including the Bolsheviki. In the program of the Russian Social Democratic Party adopted in 1903, the measure of force implicit in the dictatorship is limited to such as "will allow it to crush all resistance on the part of the exploiters," and even upon their accession to political power the Communists

of Russia did not believe that such force would necessarily reach the dimensions of terror. On that point we have the convincing testimony of the Communist leaders themselves, particularly L. Kameneff, who declares:

"There can be nothing more mistaken than to assume that the Russian proletariat, or even its leader, the Communist Party, came into power with recipes, prepared in advance, of practical measures for the realization of the dictatorship. Only Socialist ignoramuses, or charlatans, could suggest that the Russian Communists came into power with a prepared plan for a standing army, Extraordinary Commissions, and limitations of political liberty, to which the Russian proletariat was obliged to resort for self-defense after bitter experience." [12]

The Russian workers have been obliged to resort to the method of terror to cope with the threatening conditions which have developed in their country. Does it follow that the same conditions will face every proletarian revolution and force a similar course in all instances? On the basis of the general rule of cause and effect no such universal conclusion is warranted, and while Communist spokesmen are sometimes inclined to consider the terror as an inevitable feature of every proletarian dictatorship, the balance of their authority seems to reject the theory.

[12] "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," page 9.

Thus Kameneff, who, in one place asserts categorically that "when persons calling themselves Socialists, declare that the *course* of dictatorship (referring distinctly to the feature of terror), admissible and explicable in Russia, is in no wise obligatory or inevitable for any other capitalist country, they proclaim a thing directly contrary to truth," [13] admits almost in the same breath that "the question regarding the degree of severity of the dictatorship, the extent and conditions of the limitations of the political rights of the bourgeoisie and limitation of political liberty in general, the application of terroristic methods, etc., is indissolubly linked with the question of the degree, forms, stubbornness and organization of resistance by the exploiters," [14] which must, of course, vary in every country.

Lenin lays down the rule in this explicit statement: "The Question, in what countries and in what national peculiarities of this or that Capitalism a wholesale or partial restriction of democracy will be applied to the exploiters, is the question of just those national peculiarities of capitalism and of this or that revolution.[15] And the imaginative philosopher, N. Bukharin, who in one place assures us that "the capitalist states will not surrender without a struggle. They will fight desperately in order to prevent the proletariat from

[13] "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," page 8.
[14] Ibid., page 9.
[15] "The Proletarian Revolution," page 40.

securing world power," [16] in another place and in a more cheerful mood envisages a point in the growth of the proletarian world revolution at which the resistance of the capitalist class will weaken to such an extent that "finally all remnants of the bourgeois régime will in all probability surrender *in corpore* with all its organizations." [17]

On the whole it may be safely said that while a longer or shorter period of terror may become necessary under certain conditions of proletarian revolutions, the terroristic method is no more an inseparable feature of the proletarian dictatorship than the soviet is its inevitable form.

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[16] "Program of the Communists," page 19.

[17] "The Process of World Revolution and the World System of Communism." From the German translation of St. Ramm.

Chapter X

THE WORLD REVOLUTION AND RUSSIAN RE-ORIENTATION

The Russian revolution in its early periods was viewed by its authors as a mere incident in the impending international proletarian revolution, as a fulfilment of the Marxian prediction that Russia may "give the signal for a working class revolution in the West, so that both may supplement each other."

The Bolsheviki in power did not think it possible that a Socialist Russia could stand alone for any considerable length of time amidst a non-Socialist world. They considered themselves in the light of a vanguard of the world revolution charged with the task of holding the fort until re-inforcement would come from the West. They counted upon the immediate breakdown of the capitalist rule in Europe and America as a political reality, and their social theories and practical policies were shaped on that assumption.

Almost half a year after the successful accomplishment of the Bolshevik revolution, on April 14, 1918, Leo Trotzky, who is among the most optimistic leaders of Russian Communism, made this explicit avowal in a public speech:

"From the very first days of the revolution we said that the Russian revolution would be able to win and to free the Russian people only on the condition that it marked the beginning of a revolution in all countries; but that if in Germany the reign of capital remained, if in New York the supremacy of the stock exchange continued, if in England British imperialism held its sway as heretofore, then we should be done for, since they were stronger, richer than we, as yet better educated, and their military machines stronger than ours." [1]

And again:

"Our task at the present moment is to procrastinate, to hold out till the revolution begins in all European countries—to hold out, to consolidate our strength and to stand firmer on our feet, since at present we are feeble, shattered, and morally feeble." [2]

Karl Radeck, speaking retrospectively of the same period, adds the following interesting testimony: "At the conclusion of the Brest treaty, the Soviet Government estimated the breathing spell afforded by that peace as a very short one; either the world revolution would soon come and rescue Soviet Russia, or Soviet Russia would go down in the unequal conflict—such was our view at that time. And this conception was in accordance with the situation at that moment." [3]

[1] "A Paradise in This World," Publication of British Socialist Party, London, page 11.
[2] Ibid., page 13.
[3] "Soviet Russian Concession to Capital," Article in *Soviet Russia Magazine*, N. Y., February 12, 1921.

The hope and belief in an impending world revolution of the working class persisted tenaciously among the leaders of the Russian revolution.

Lenin's spirited polemic with Karl Kautsky concludes with this postscript: "The above lines were written on November 9, 1918. In the night following news was received from Germany announcing the beginning of *a victorious revolution,* at first at Kiel and other northern towns and ports, where power had passed into the hands of Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, *and then in Berlin, where the authority has also passed into the hands of the Soviet.* The conclusion which I was going to write on Kautsky's pamphlet and on the *proletarian revolution* has thereby been rendered superfluous." [4] (Italics mine.)

The failure of the German rising as a proletarian Soviet revolution and the similar disappointments elsewhere had but little effect upon the Messianic faith of the Russian Communists, and for a long time they continued to acclaim every new political or industrial struggle on a large scale in the countries of the West as the beginning of a decisive proletarian revolution.

Only when the Sparticide risings in Germany were quelled and the Hungarian Soviet government was overthrown; when the great struggle in the Italian metal industry was settled by mutual concessions, and

[4] "The Proletarian Revolution," page 113.

the oft-announced general strikes in England systematically failed to materialize; when the spirit of unrest and rebellion engendered by the war and the Versailles "settlement" was succeeded by a state of sullen apathy, and the capitalist world settled down to a spell of heavy political reaction, only then did the Communists begin to lose faith in an imminent world revolution.

The Russian revolution could no longer be treated as the mere initial phase of a spontaneous and simultaneous international working-class rising. It was a phenomenon by itself, to be accounted for by its own peculiar causes and dependent for its continuance largely upon its own resources. The recognition of this fact forced a sharp re-orientation in the theoretical bases and practical policies of the Soviet government. So long as the Russian revolution was viewed as an integral part of a general world-wide rising of the working class, it was possible to bring it within the accepted Marxian concept, but as an isolated event it calls for a new and different theoretical foundation. And the Bolshevist authorities, never embarrassed or abashed about theories, promptly met the need.

In his report on National and Colonial Questions before the Second Congress of the Communist International Lenin raises the question of the functions of the Communist Party in "pre-capitalist" countries, and arrives at the following answer:

"In such countries it is quite possible to establish a Soviet authority. The experiences of Russia and of

various Mussulman republics—for example, Turkestan—show that the Soviet republic can be successful not only in proletarian countries but even in those countries where pre-capitalist relations exist. In these countries great difficulty is experienced in organizing Soviets, but without question it is possible to arouse an independent revolutionary consciousness and movement even in these countries. The Soviet idea is very simple and can be understood not only by the proletariat, but also by the broader non-proletarian masses. * * *

"We must abandon scientific prejudices that each country must absolutely pass through capitalist exploitation. The régime of Soviets, when there is a powerful proletariat uprising on a world scale, can be established in those countries in which the capitalist development has not attained any serious proportions."[5] (Italics mine.)

The "scientific prejudices" here mentioned have reference to the theory that every country must pass through the phase of capitalist development before it is ripe for Socialism, which Karl Marx has formulated in the preface to the first edition of his Capital in the following characteristically vigorous language:

"Intrinsically, it is not a question of a higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist produc-

[5] "The Second Congress of the Communist International," pages 38 and 39.

tion. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies *working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the lesser developed, the image of its own future.*"

Are we justified in discarding this theory as a mere "scientific prejudice?" The experience of Russia has concretely demonstrated that a Socialist revolution has been possible at least in one great country "in which capitalist development had not attained any serious proportions." Whether that experience is altogether *sui generis* or can be reasonably generalized into a law of social development, and particularly whether the operation of such a law can be extended to Asiatic countries of Mohammedan culture is fairly open to discussion, but the interesting point is that the new doctrine marks a clear departure from one of the fundamental tenets of Marxian historical science.

While Lenin is still cautious in his statement and limits the possibility of "leaping over" the capitalist phase of development to conditions "when there is a powerful uprising on a world scale," Bukharin proceeds frankly and boldly to build an entirely novel and universal theory of revolution. He admits that the type of the Socialist or Communist revolution must of necessity be higher in the countries of advanced capitalist development and proletarian organization than in those of pre-capitalist economy, but declares that the superiority of the type of such revolutions must not be

confused with the question of their chronological order. Summing up his theory, he arrives at the following interesting results: "If we examine the revolutionary process on a world-wide scale, we may draw the following general conclusions: The revolutionary world process begins in those parts of the economic system of the world in which the degree of development is lower, in which the victory of the proletariat is easier, but the crystallization of the new system is more difficult. The rapidity with which a revolution is accomplished stands in inverse ratio to the maturity of capitalist development and to the height of the revolutionary type achieved."*

Here is the late Peter Nikitich Tkachoff resurrected, modernized and generalized. Under the new doctrine of the "ultra Marxian" Bukharin it is not difficult to discern the cloven hoof of the old "Narodnik" with his specious argument: "We have no proletariat, but we also have no bourgeoisie, hence the struggle of our workers is easier."

Bukharin's striking conclusions proceed from the theory that the war in destroying the unstable equilibrium of international capitalist organization has broken down the entire world system of capitalist economy, and that the weaker parts of the system, no longer able to lean on its stronger links, will automatically collapse.

* "The Process of World Revolution and the World System of Communism."

He takes it for granted that such collapse must assume the form of proletarian revolutions.

The revolution is thus viewed as a purely passive process. Its success is made to depend not on the strength of the proletarian attack but solely on the weakness of the bourgeois resistance. Bukharin seems to overlook the pertinent fact that in the countries of the "lowest level of capitalist development," there is a rule no revolutionary proletariat to contest even the feeble rule of the bourgeoisie.

The Bolshevist theoreticians have "learned over" a great deal since the pre-revolutionary days of 1915, when Lenin wrote:

"A revolution is not produced by every revolutionary situation; it is produced when, in addition to the objective changes enumerated above (a weakened ruling class and intense suffering and activity of the masses) certain subjective changes take place, viz., *when a revolutionary class shows ability to take revolutionary mass action sufficiently forceful to break, or at least to damage, the existing government. Even in times of crises, governments do not 'tumble down of their own accord,'* but require a force to 'overthrow' them." [7]

But the theoretical re-orientation is of only slight importance compared with the radical modifications of the practical policies which the Russian Communists

[7] "The Collapse of the Second International," Glasgow, page 17.

adopted as a result of their disillusionment on the subject of the impending world revolution. Both the foreign policy and the internal economy of Soviet Russia were profoundly affected by the new point of view.

As to the change in Russia's foreign policy Karl Radek with his customary frankness makes the following explanation:

"The fact that the world war has been ended, that the demobilization crisis has been overcome, that the world revolution has not broken up the capitalist world in the form of an explosion, but in the form of a gradual corrosion—*this fact completely alters the situation, the conditions, of the foreign policies of the Soviet Government.*

On the one hand, the Soviet Government cannot reckon on a swift mechanical liberation through a mass movement that would completely overthrow the Clemenceaus, Lloyd Georges, and all they stand for, and, on the other hand, the Soviet Government may be mathematically certain that the process of capitalistic disintegration will continue and lighten its burdens. *But as this is a long process,* Soviet Russia cannot escape the question of seeking a *modus vivendi* with those states that are still capitalistic." [8] (Italics mine.)

And Lenin expresses a similar view in a recent speech before the Soviet functionaries of Moscow. "So long as the world revolution is not here," he says, "we need

[8] *Soviet Russia Magazine,* N. Y., February 12, 1921.

bourgeois capital. Since our country is in a position of extreme economic weakness, how can we accelerate the process of industrial development? With the aid of bourgeois capital." [9]

The first practical application of this principle of compromise was made in connection with several important "concessions" to foreign bourgeois capital. These concessions cover vast areas of forest land, coal and iron mining districts, and several valuable industrial franchises. As indicating the length to which the Soviet government is ready to go, it is interesting to note that these concessions, which run for long terms (in the case of the American promoter Washington D. Vanderlip, for 60 years), carry express guaranties embodied in a formal decree of the Council of Peoples' Commissars to the effect that the concessionaires' investments and property would at no time be "nationalized, confiscated or requisitioned" and that the concessionaires would have the right to employ Russian workers as wage laborers subject to the observance of the labor laws of the country.

Capitalism, which was officially banished from Soviet Russia is thus allowed to come back at least in spots by way of the back door.

A compromise of a somewhat different character is involved in the efforts to conclude trade agreements

[9] "German Translation in New Yorker Volkszeitung," February 8, 1921.

with foreign capitalist countries. Foreign trade has always been a necessity for Russia. It has become more vital than ever at this time on account of the progressive destruction of the country's mechanical implements of production and means of transportation since the outbreak of the war. If the industrial countries of Europe and America, or some of them, had been under proletarian rule, trade agreements with Russia would, of course, be effected without any compromise of principle or policy. But the *Realpolitiker* of Soviet Russia understand perfectly well that they cannot reach any agreement with the capitalist governments of the West so long as they are engaged in open and active propaganda for the overthrow of these very governments. The *modus vivendi* with foreign capitalist governments thus necessarily implies a serious curtailment of Soviet Russia's international revolutionary activities.

The very first article of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement provides: "That each party refrains from hostile action or undertakings against the other and from conducting outside of its own borders any official propaganda, *direct or indirect,* against the institutions of the British Empire or the Russian Soviet Republic, respectively, *and more particularly that the Russian Soviet Government refrains from any attempt,* by military or diplomatic *or any other form of action or propaganda,* to encourage any of the peoples of Asia in any form of hostile action against British interests or the British Empire."

And the paragraph is emphasized by the further explanatory provision "that the term 'conducting any official propaganda' includes the giving by either party of assistance or *encouragement to any propaganda* conducted outside of its own borders." (Italics mine.)

At least to the uninitiated this stipulation sounds like a complete abandonment of the Communist efforts "to arouse an independent and revolutionary consciousness and movement in the 'various Mussulman republics.'" It seems to confirm Martoff's charge that the Communists use the peoples of the East "as pawns on the chess-board of the diplomatic war with the Entente" [10] and to lend point to Radek's reported admission that the "levers of the Oriental upheaval are all in the Kremlin, and Moscow could pull them or leave them untouched exactly as her own interests dictated." [11]

Similarly the recent note of the Soviet government addressed to President Harding after expressing the hope "that intimate and solid ties would be created between the two republics" (the Communist workers' republic of Russia and the ultra-bourgeois republic of the United States) conveys the "categorical declaration" of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee that the Soviet Republic "has not the intention of intervening in the internal affairs of America."

[10] "U. S. P. D. Protokoll," page 214.

[11] H. N. Brailsford in *London Daily Herald*, December 28, 1920.

But with all its efforts to placate foreign capital the government of Soviet Russia is too wise to expect very substantial help for the economic reconstruction of the country from that source. The task of rebuilding Russia must be accomplished in the first line by Russia herself, and in justice to the Communist leaders it must be said that they never hesitated to sacrifice pet theories to practical tasks.

The industrial system of Soviet Russia was inaugurated as one of "Workmen's Control," based on the management of the workers in each plant through Shop Stewards' Committees elected by them and on the subordination of the "bourgeois" manager or expert to such committees. The workers were to have complete self-government and democracy in production. The immaturity of the Russian proletariat, its lack of training, discipline and organizing capacity rendered the new system utterly unworkable. It was abandoned with summary dispatch and supplanted by a system of state Socialism of an almost military character.

The shop committee was abolished, and the shop placed under one-man management mostly represented by a "specialist of the bourgeois school."

The universal duty to work was proclaimed and industrial conscription introduced. To secure the utmost production the Soviet government not only resorted to the well-known capitalist methods of stimulation through varying wages, piece work, bonuses, extra pay for over-time, etc., but established a minimum

standard of production and a system of fines for falling below the standard.

All these measures are, of course, considered in the light of temporary institutions necessitated by the exigencies of the acute struggles of the Soviet régime. It is expected that work will become more voluntary, compensation more equal, and management more democratic, with the progressive improvements in the industrial system, and the growing development of the workers in skill, discipline and productivity.

The expectation may be well founded. But the course of Soviet Russia's industrial and political policies once more goes to show the precarious nature of any "leap" over a historical phase of development. The Soviet régime of Russia undertook a jump beyond the limits of physical possibility. It has had to pay a heavy penalty for the levity of its youthful enthusiasm and to take a fresh and harder start at more realistic beginnings. For the future of Russia and for the Socialist movement of the rest of the world the lesson is of tremendous importance.

Chapter XI

EAST AND WEST

At this point in our discussion it may be useful to attempt a general comparison between the situation and problems of the Russian revolution and those that confront the Socialist movement in the West.

The Russian revolution from the very first was confronted not only by the difficulties and struggles which every proletarian revolution must anticipate, but also by a complex of special problems arising from the peculiar conditions of the country.

From the point of view of social and economic development it was a premature birth. It produced what Bukharin terms "a lower type."

The "inferiority" of the Russian revolution does not consist in the fact that it has failed to establish a Socialist or Communist order in full bloom. A Socialist revolution in the industrially advanced countries of the West will also not mean the immediate advent of Socialism. As in the case of Russia it can only be the starting point for a systematic realization of the Socialist program. But the concrete tasks of such a revolution will of necessity differ from those which confront Russia.

While the latter starts with a system of industries, largely socialized but entirely backward, the former will begin with a highly organized industrial order developed under individual ownership. The Russian problem is to build up the socialized industries as fast as possible. The problem of the proletarian revolutions in the West will be to transfer the industries into common ownership with little or no damage to their highly organized and finely adjusted mechanism and functions.

It seemed comparatively easy to abolish the private ownership of the few and scattered Russian industrial concerns by summary revolutionary decree, though even there the task of maintaining their efficiency under the sudden change proved vastly more difficult. In the countries of modern type, in which large-scale industry is the life nerve of the people, the process of transition from private to communal ownership must necessarily be more deliberate and cautious. Modern Socialism has never contemplated the summary socialization of the industries immediately after the proletarian revolution.

As far back as 1848, Marx and Engels (in the Communist Manifesto) asserted that "the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest *by degrees* all capital from the bourgeoisie," and laid down an elaborate program of measures for the gradual socialization of industries in "the most advanced countries." At that time the capitalist system of production was in its infancy. It has since grown enormously in the

complexity of its organization, and the task of Socialist transformation has become infinitely more delicate.

On the other hand the socialization of agriculture offers a more difficult problem to Soviet Russia than it will present to the proletarian revolutions in the countries of the West, in which land culture engages a much smaller portion of the population and is at once better organized and of lesser importance in the national economy.

"There can be no doubt," admits Lenin, "that, in a peasant country like Russia, Socialist reconstruction is a very difficult problem. Beyond doubt it was comparatively easy to overthrow enemies like the Tsardom or the power of the landowners. It was possible to carry this out in the center in a few days and throughout the country in a few weeks. But the problem we are tackling now is, of its very nature, one which can be solved only by long and stubborn effort. Here we have to fight step by step and yard by yard in the battle to secure the conquests of Soviet Russia and the communal tilling of the soil. Under no circumstances, of course, can such a change from small individual farming to communal tillage be completed all at once." [1]

Lenin by no means overstates the difficulties of the situation. The question of land socialization in agricultural Russia is comparable to that of socializing

[1] "The Land Revolution in Russia," London, 1919, pp. 8 and 9.

the plants in the industrial West, and on the whole it may be said that the problems are of inverse difficulty and importance in the two different types of civilization.

This cardinal difference between Russia and the Western countries has forced the adoption of a different economic policy by the Russian Revolution than that to which the victorious working class in the more advanced parts of the world will presumably have to resort. The economic arrangements of Soviet Russia must therefore, at least in part, be considered specifically Russian rather than general features of the proletarian revolution.

Similarly the political institutions and measures of the Soviet republic may largely be traced to the peculiar feature of the Russian revolution that it was made and is being maintained by a proletariat which constitutes but a small minority of the population. There is no sound reason to believe that the working class of the West, when it comes into power as a clear majority of the whole people, will find it necessary or useful to adopt the same contrivances and methods for holding power: that it will be bound to inaugurate a soviet form of government based on restricted and unequal franchise and indirect representation, to apply methods of political suppression and terror in any form, or at least in the same form and degree as they have been resorted to in Russia.

With respect to the post-revolutionary program of Socialism the Russian example can thus not be accepted as conclusive upon all countries and in all points.

The problems so far considered are furthermore only such as arise from the inherent economic differences between Russia and the Western countries, problems that would survive even a Socialist revolution in the latter countries. But we must not overlook the difference between the situation of the Russian Socialists and their comrades in other countries which is created by their political status to-day.

In Russia the revolution has been accomplished. In other countries it is yet to come. In one case Socialism appears as a dominant state power, in the other as a struggling opposition movement. It is obvious that the two situations present radical differences in the immediate and practical tasks which they impose.

In Russia the Socialists are in possession of the powers of government and their immediate political task is to maintain themselves in power. In the Western countries the bourgeoisie is in political control, and the immediate political task of the workers is to wrest the power from the hands of their opponents.

And this task is by no means as simple as it appeared for a time to large sections of the international Socialist movement and particularly to the Communists of Russia.

Normally the western countries of Europe are much better prepared for a proletarian revolution than Russia was in 1917. Germany, Austria, England, France, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Holland, and Denmark have reached varying, but on the whole high, degrees of capitalist development with large class-conscious and well organized proletarian populations. Objectively they may thus be considered ripe for working-class political rule. The so-called subjective factors, i. e., the political demoralization of the bourgeoisie and the determination, readiness and preparedness of the workers to assume power, are for the moment lacking. The revolutionary spirit which flared up immediately before and after the conclusion of the war and produced the several Socialist and semi-Socialist revolutions and semi-revolutions, has for the time being been repressed by the crushing effects of the defeat in the Central countries, the heavy atmosphere of jingoism in some of the Entente countries, and principally by the economic misery of the world; the general condition of apathy and reaction in the western world has been further intensified by the disunion among and between the Socialists of the different countries.

The experience of the Russian revolution has also served to make the workers of Europe more cautious. The continuous war of the international capitalist powers against the workers' and peasants' republic at a time when the whole world seemed exhausted by war, and the relentless starvation blockade maintained

without a pretense of justification in international law, were concrete indications of the length to which the capitalist world will go in its efforts to suppress proletarian revolutions. Russia could hold out physically against the combined hostile powers of Europe and America because it is self-contained at least in the matter of food. The vast majority of the population, living in the villages, had enough to eat at all times; the town population suffered but did not starve. There is no country in western Europe that would be equally able to withstand such a siege. Not only that the countries are smaller and less self-sufficient by nature, but the very fact of their higher industrial development renders them more dependent upon each other for their daily subsistence. The perfection of the capitalist system of production has led to an international division of labor. Each modern country is specialized in a comparatively narrow range of industries, and depends upon other countries for the purchase of some of its products and the supply of some of its necessaries. No industrial country of western Europe produces more than a mere fraction of its own food. If a proletarian régime should be established in England or France or Italy, it could be completely starved out by a general capitalist blockade within a few months, if not weeks. A Socialist revolution in the countries of Western Europe would thus face a very precarious career unless it be reinforced by a simultaneous or nearly simultaneous rising in one or more additional countries, who together could form a tolerably com-

plete economic world unit; or unless the Socialist movement in the other countries be so strong and determined as to prevent the capitalist governments from interfering with the new Socialist republic.

The prime task of the Socialist movement in these countries, therefore, is to revive and stimulate the spirit of revolutionary enthusiasm among the workers, to consolidate, train and prepare their own ranks for the decisive battle, and above all, to strengthen the bonds of solidarity and co-operation among the Socialists of the interdependent countries. For the Socialist movement in countries like the United States, in which the physical basis for the Socialist transformation is fully developed, but the working class is ludicrously immature politically and intellectually, the immediate need is for primary Socialist education.

These concrete tasks of Western Socialism presuppose liberty of propaganda, organization and political action. Without them a successful movement of the great working-class masses in modern countries is almost unthinkable. We are thus led to the practical distinction between democracy as an abstract ideal and what Kautsky terms Democracy as a method. Whatever may be thought of the operation and effects of a democratic form of government in a class state, the concrete democratic institutions, the liberty of the press, speech and meeting, the right of organization and the franchise, are practically indispensable to the conduct of a large-scale class struggle in the industrial and

political field. To the extent to which these institutions are curtailed by capitalist government, the Socialist propaganda is hampered. Nothing therefore is more reactionary in practice than the alleged super-revolutionary attitude of indifference or contempt for the "bourgeois-democratic" institutions as weapons in the fight of Socialism.

On this point again we are confronted by a vital difference between the policies of Socialist Russia and the Socialists of the West. Bukharin explains and illustrates this difference in his own delightfully frank, almost naive style. Says he:

"Another question must be put to us: Why did not the Bolsheviki *talk* about the abrogation of all the liberties of the bourgeoisie before? Why did they formerly themselves favor a bourgeois-democratic republic? Why did they formerly declare themselves in favor of the Constituent Assembly and *say nothing* of depriving the bourgeois of the right to vote? In a word, why have they now changed their program in regard to these questions?

"Very simply answered. The working class did not as yet possess the strength to go right out and storm the bourgeois fortress. It required preparation, a chance to collect its forces, the enlightenment of the masses, organization.

"It required, for example, the freedom of the press of the workers—its own press, not that belonging to

the masters. But it could not come to the capitalists and their government and state such a demand as, 'Messrs. Capitalists, shut down your press and publish my newspapers, workers' newspapers.' The working class would only have been ridiculed, for it is ridiculous to make such a demand of the capitalist; that would be asking him to cut his own throat. Such demands can be made only when the fight is about to be carried into the enemy's country. Therefore the working class said (*and our party also said*) *'Three cheers for the freedom of the press* (*the whole press, including the press of the bourgeoisie*)*!'* Or another example: It is plain that the employers' associations—those that force the workers out into the street, keep blacklists, etc.—are a great menace to the workers. But the working class could not step up and say, 'Close down your associations and open ours.' That implies breaking the power of capitalism. For this there was not sufficient strength. Hence *our party said at that time: 'We demand freedom of association* (*in general, not only for the workers*)*.'*

"Now the times are changed. There is no longer any necessity for a painful preparation for the conflict; we are now living in the period following the storm, following the first great victory over the bourgeoisie. Now the working class has set itself another task—to crush once and for all the resistance of the bourgeoisie." [2] (Italics mine.)

[2] "Program of the Communists," pages 29 and 30.

The Socialist movement outside of Russia is still under the "necessity for a painful preparation for the conflict." According to Bukharin it still must proffer "Three cheers for the freedom of the press" (including the press of the bourgeoisie) and "demand the freedom of association" (for all classes). In short, it must fight for the maintenance and extension of democratic institutions. But would it not be crediting the bourgeoisie with a greater degree of generosity or stupidity than it possesses, to expect that it will accede to the Socialist demands for freedom of the press and association, if such demands are coupled with the cheerful assurance that when the "times change" and the working-class gains political power, it will use it to "crush once and for all" these same liberties of the bourgeoisie, as Bukharin clearly implies?

To paraphrase his own illustration, would it be quite rational to address the capitalist governments with a proposition like this: "Messrs. Capitalists, accord us full liberty of press, speech, meeting, association, voting, etc., so that we may freely conduct our struggle for your overthrow, and when we have succeeded through the instruments you have placed in our hands, we will use our victory to deprive you of all civil and political liberties?"

The Socialist demand upon the bourgeois state for the maintenance of democratic institutions will be effective and consistent only if it proceeds from the theory that a Socialist state will also tolerate political

opposition in all forms of normal propaganda and peaceful activity. A Socialist government will, of course, always maintain the right to suppress active counter-revolutionary plots aiming at its violent overthrow in the same way as a bourgeois government will always claim and exercise the right of suppressing active revolutionary plots for the overthrow of its rule.

Another phase of the same question is presented by the Bolshevist advocacy of "illegal work" in connection with the Socialist propaganda. The Platform-Resolution of the Communist International formulates the principle in the following language:

"In a country where the bourgeoisie, or the counter-revolutionary Social-Democracy is in power, the Communist Party must learn to coordinate its legal work with illegal work, *and the legal work must always be under the effective control of the illegal party.*" (Italics mine.) The same theory occurs again and again in the writings of Lenin and other Bolshevist authorities.

Social movements based on material interests and the ideas and ideals springing from such movements cannot be suppressed by physical force. This is almost axiomatic. If a Socialist or any other revolutionary movement will not be allowed to carry on its propaganda openly and within the law, it will find means to work secretly and against the law. But the method of secret and underground propaganda must always

remain inadequate to meet the manifold requirements of the class struggle in an advanced country. Even with their large daily press and own publishing houses; their meeting halls and public propaganda; their powerful unions, co-operatives and political organizations, their strikes, demonstrations and electoral campaigns, the modern Socialist and labor movements have a very difficult stand against the superior bourgeois facilities for influencing the masses of the people. What effect can the clandestine publication and meager distribution of a few revolutionary leaflets or publications or the holding of a few secret meetings be expected to have upon the titanic struggles of modern Socialism, in which millions upon millions of workers are pitched against the tremendous organized power of international capital?

The only notable instances in the history of modern Socialism in which "illegal" work was resorted to, were those in Russia under the Tsar and in Germany under Bismarck. In both cases the tactics of secrecy were forced upon the movement by absolute prohibition of open activities. In Russia the underground propaganda of Socialism, conducted through several decades with marvelous ingenuity and untold sacrifices, never reached more than a mere fringe of the population.

In Germany during the anti-Socialist laws the Social Democrats had their parliamentary elections as periodical gathering points and Parliament itself as a public forum, and they gained strength largely through

these instruments. Summing up the experience of this period Frederick Engels remarks in what may be considered his political Testament:

"And thus it happened that the bourgeoisie and the government came to a pass where they feared the lawful activity of the workers' party far more than its unlawful activity; they dreaded the result of an election more than those of rebellion." [3]

The Russian Communists, of course, also do not prefer illegal methods on principle.[4] But their insistent emphasis upon the necessity of "co-ordinating" legal with illegal work tends to create the impression that both are of equal importance and efficiency, and to weaken the struggle for the maintenance of the right of open public propaganda.

The subordination of legal work (when illegal work also becomes necessary) to the "effective control of the illegal party," would furthermore reduce the Socialist parties to the position of conspiratory organizations, and turn them back to the days of Blanquism, when it was still considered possible to have proletarian revolutions carried out "by small conscious minorities at the head of the unconscious masses."

[3] "After Fifty Years."

[4] Although some of their expressions would almost seem to convey that notion. Thus Lenin ("The Collapse of Second International," page 52) charges that it was the possibility of acting within the law that reared "opportunism" within the labor parties of the period of the second International.

Chapter XII

THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

The Russian Revolution is beyond doubt the greatest event in the history of Socialism. Its advent has profoundly modified the situation and outlook of the movement in all countries. While the social and political institutions and the practical policies which it has evolved need not be accepted as models for all future proletarian revolutions, and while the new theoretical doctrines which its authors have formulated cannot claim general and uniform applicability, the Russian Revolution has forced a critical re-examination of the theoretical bases of the movement, a decided shifting of emphasis in its methods and a radical regrouping of its forces.

The principal contribution of Soviet Russia has been, to borrow a pithy expression from Marx, "its own working existence." The fact of the workers' and peasants' republic in the largest country of Europe has forever destroyed the superstitions and unreasoning belief that the capitalist order of society is unalterable and eternal. With one blow it has transferred the Socialist ideal from the abstract and speculative realms of Utopia to the solid ground of reality.

Prior to the Russian revolution the Socialist movement of most countries of Europe was engaged in the task of training and educating the working classes in the general idea of social revolution without a well defined purpose of securing the governments of their own countries in their own day. It was like the routine work of drilling a regular army in times of peace without reference to a concrete impending war. The vast organizations of Socialism and labor were adjusted to such peace-time activities, and when the crisis came a number of the leaders and large portions of the masses were unable to adapt themselves to the new situation. They were passed over by the active revolutionary struggles, just as peace-time generals are discarded and peace-time armies reorganized upon the outbreak of actual hostilities. It is this inevitable development that accounts largely for the "betrayal" of the Second International.

The Russian Revolution has suddenly ushered in a new era in the Socialist movement of the world—the era of direct efforts for the practical realization of the Socialist program. It was the example of Soviet Russia that made possible the attempted Socialist régimes in Hungary and Finland, and to a minor extent in Germany and Austria. And while these first attempts have failed and the revolutionary wave has been succeeded by a state of reaction, the check can only be of a temporary nature. As soon as the prevailing condition of economic depression and the moral

and political aftermath of the war will ease up to an appreciable extent, the workers will undoubtedly reorganize their forces and return to the attack.

In the more advanced countries of Europe the new economic and political conditions have created a potential "revolutionary situation"; the direct objective of the next Socialist attack in any of them may be the immediate conquest of the powers of government. The spirit and tempo of such renewed movements and their eventual success or failure will inevitably be influenced to a large extent by developments in Soviet Russia.

For no matter how justly the conditions of Russia and the special kind of Socialism produced by them may be differentiated from the conditions in the west and the type of Socialism which is expected to be reared on their foundations, the world at large will invariably and summarily sweep aside all such distinctions. To the masses of workers and non-workers Soviet Russia is and always will be a practical demonstration of Socialism at work, and the prototype of all Socialist governments. The successes of the Russian struggle will inspire and stimulate the Socialist movement of all countries. Her failures will be direct set-backs to the whole of international Socialism.

The workers of Europe, moreover, will need the support of Soviet Russia after their accession to power even more than her cooperation in the period of struggle for political supremacy. Every new Socialist republic in Europe will, as suggested in the preceding

chapter, depend for its safety most directly upon the co-existence of a Socialist régime or at least of a potent Socialist influence in one or more adjacent countries. But the active assistance of a powerful country like Russia will be of inestimable value in its struggles against foreign capitalist attacks.

A whole-hearted support of Soviet Russia by the advanced workers everywhere is thus dictated not only by their natural sentimental attachment for the first Socialist republic, but also by their direct class interests.

On the other hand, the destiny of Soviet Russia is indissolubly linked with the success or failure of the Socialist movement beyond her boundaries. So long as Russia will remain the only Socialist country in the world, it will not cease to be the target of capitalist attacks, and every *modus vivendi* which it may establish with foreign powers will be extremely precarious.

Only when additional Socialist republics will be securely established in Europe, can international capitalism be expected to reconcile itself to the new order.

Until the advent of such governments the capitalist classes of the most powerful countries will inevitably be tempted to renew armed hostilities on every propitious occasion, unless they will be deterred from such attempts by the presence in their own countries of strong and determined organizations of labor in known sympathy with the Soviet Republic.

At no time did the Socialist movement stand in greater need of harmonious cooperation of all its parts and at no time was it more disrupted than in this critical period of its history. The most urgent and immediate task before the Socialists of the world is to rebuild an effective international organization, and that task calls for the utmost sagacity and broad-minded statesmanship within the movement.

Responding to the needs of the present conditions of the Socialist movement the new International must be primarily an organization of action, just as the First International was largely one of discussion and the Second of propaganda and organization in conformity with the requirements in the respective periods of their activities. The tests of membership in the new international body should accordingly be more stringent than those laid down by its percursors. They must include an absolute assurance of active support of Soviet Russia and all other Socialist governments that may hereafter be established and of consistent opposition to any attacks against them on the part of the capitalist governments. They may impose a definite inhibition of Socialist participation in bourgeois governments, and exact a greater degree of practical conformity with decisions on international policies and tactics than the Second International did.

But with the establishment of clear tests in the general policies of an international character, a rational world-organization of modern Socialism must allow

its affiliated parties at least the same independence in the determination of their national tactics, form of organization and methods of struggle as the Second International did. In the period of the latter the conditions and tasks of the Socialist movement of the various countries differed in degree rather than in substance. Strong or weak, old or new, they were all engaged in propagandistic activities and industrial and political struggles along practically uniform lines. It was conceivably possible, though never attempted, to formulate a general code of tactics for all of them.

The war and the revolutions have developed new and radical divergencies in the Socialist movement of the different countries. To-day the Socialist Party is the ruling political party in Russia, a party deposed from power in Hungary and Finland, a plurality party in the several leading countries of the European continent, a weak minority party in a highly developed capitalist state, as in England and America, or an embryonic party of vague outlines, as in the countries of the far East. To attempt to cast all these divergent movements into one mould of program, methods and organization, or to direct their activities from one center is to sacrifice all realities to a doctrinaire scheme.

The new Socialist International furthermore must be international as well as Socialistic, international in form and function as well as in aspirations. It must not be dominated by the movement of one country and must serve the interests of all countries alike. The

Second International was largely ruled by the German Social Democracy, and when the latter surrendered on August 4th, 1914, the whole international structure of Socialism collapsed. The new International must not lean too heavily on Russia if it is to be built on more solid foundations than its predecessor. Just because of the far-reaching effects of the Russian example upon the workers of the whole world, the Socialists of that country must treat their power as a trust for the Socialist movement of all countries. They must shape their policies with reference to these effects and in the largest possible measure in consultation and active cooperation with the militant working class of all countries.

The Russian Communists have had an exceptional opportunity to lead in the re-formation of the International of Socialism, but have lamentably failed to rise to it. The Communist International, which has been created under their inspiration, falls short in all substantial requirements as an effective instrument in the modern world struggles of the working class. As at present constituted and managed, it is not international but sectional and sectarian. It is essentially Russian in structure, conception and program.

Its permanent seat is in Russia, its principal officials are Russian, and its powerful Executive Committee is dominated by Russians. Out of a total membership of twenty, which go to make up the latter body, five are representatives of the Communist Party of Russia

(with five or more additional "alternates"), the remaining fifteen seats are apportioned among all other countries, each receiving one, regardless of size or importance. If it is taken into account that the latter include several members with practically imaginary constituencies, that the whole work of the Executive Committee is virtually financed by Russia, and that the majority of its Bureau or "Presidium," the everyday working body, is composed of Russians, it must be realized that the Communist International represents little more than the international dictatorship of the Communist Party of Russia. The reports of all proceedings of its Executive Committee and Congresses show how thoroughly this Russian rule asserts itself in actual operation.

The absolute Russian control of the Communist International is particularly unhealthy because of the fact that the Russian proletariat is a ruling class.

The Socialist International is in the first instance a fighting organization of revolutionary opposition parties united in the common struggle against the ruling capitalist classes of the world. The political parties of the bourgeoisie need no international organization for the protection of their general class interests. The governments take care of that through established diplomatic channels or their League of Nations. Similarly when the Socialist régime will have conquered the greater part of the world the militant Socialist International will naturally be superseded by

an international federation of Socialist governments. In the transitory period when the Socialist movement contains one or more parties in power amidst an organization of minority opposition-parties, the position of the former will be extraordinarily delicate, as it will not always prove an easy task to divorce their international Socialist policies from the practical politics of the Foreign Office of their government.

I have had occasion to point out this danger in the attitude of the Communist International towards the revolutionary movements of the Far East. A somewhat similar danger seems to lurk in its relations with the Socialist movements of Europe and America.

The hope of an immediately impending world revolution, which seemed so essential to the maintenance of Soviet Russia, and was at the bottom of her domestic and foreign policies, also inspired the organization and program of the Communist International. But while the Bolshevist authorities have definitely abandoned the hope and theory for home consumption, they cling to it with strange tenacity in their international program. The Platform-Resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International still views the world as on the eve of a general proletarian revolution, and the famous twenty-one "Conditions of Affiliation" represent a plan of battle issued by an international General Staff.

"The world proletariat is on the eve of decisive battles," proclaims the Platform-Resolution. "We are

living through an epoch of direct civil wars. But the decisive hour is near. In almost all the countries where there is a considerable labor movement the working class will have before it in the immediate future a series of fierce encounters.

Now more than ever does the working class need a solidified organization. The working class must prepare ceaselessly for the coming decisive struggle *without losing a single hour of the precious time that remains.*" (Italics mine.)

In the twenty-one Conditions the assertion is made even more pointedly: "The class struggle in *almost every country of Europe and America* is entering upon the phase of civil war." (Italics mine.)

If words mean anything these statements convey the assertion that the working classes are arrayed for a decisive armed contest for the immediate conquest of political powers in almost every country of Europe and America, i. e., in the United States and Canada as well as in the Central and South American republics; and it is on this fantastic assumption that the scheme of organization of Communist International is based.

"À la guerre comme à la guerre." Civil war calls for military tactics. "The Communist International till now was primarily an organ of propaganda and agitation. The Communist International now becomes a militant organization, *which will have to assume immediate direction of the movement in the various coun-*

tries." (Italics mine.) Zinovieff announces [1] and the Conditions of Affiliation thus formulate the logical application of the doctrine:

"At the present time of acute civil war the Communist Party will be able fully to do its duty only when it is organized in a sufficiently thorough way, when it possesses an iron discipline, and when its party center enjoys the confidence of the members of the party, who are to endow this center with complete power, authority and ample rights."

The phrase about "iron discipline" is by no means mere rhetoric. The "Conditions of Affiliation" impose upon the international Communist fraternity a code of rules and regulations which bears a close resemblance not only to the ordinary military regulations but also to the "Letter on Obedience" of the ingenious founder of the Jesuit Order. All Communist parties are directed to make periodical "clearances" of their members in order to rid them of all "petty bourgeois elements"; they are also bound to "inspect the personnel of their parliamentary representatives and to remove all unreliable elements therefrom." The entire party press must be edited by "reliable Communists" under the strict supervision of the party authorities, and all national platforms or programs must be submitted for confirmation to the next Congress of the Communist International or its Executive Committee.

[1] At the second congress of the Communist International.

To the same general spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola is also to be traced the intolerance of criticism, the reglementation of opinion within the Socialist movement. All Socialists who fail to subscribe to every article of the neo-Communist creed are branded as "traitors" and "agents of the capitalist class," and parties desiring to affiliate with the Communist International are warned of the necessity "of a complete and absolute rupture with reformism and the policy of the 'centrists'," and of advocating such a rupture "among the widest circles of the party membership."

To the Socialist movement of the world the Communist International has brought not peace but the sword. At a time when the movement, weakened and disrupted by the war, stands most in need of reconstruction and re-union, it offers it a bigoted policy of rupture and expulsion.

And the new policy is working to perfection. Within the first two years of the energetic activities of the Communist International the Socialist movement of every country in the world was successfully "ruptured."

What the Communists of Russia have contributed to the Socialist movement of the world by the inspiration of their soviet republic, they have more than offset by the disruptive activities of their International. The Communist International as at present constituted may be justly defined as the instrument with which Soviet Russia frustrates its own effectiveness as a factor in the proletarian world revolution.

On the other hand, all other attempts to recreate a virile International of Socialism have so far failed. The process can evidently not be forced. It must wait upon the healing hand of time, and to the optimistic and hopeful the working of the hand is already discernible.

The Communist re-orientation inside of Russia is in the long run bound to reflect itself upon the international Socialist movement.

With the abatement of foreign capitalist warfare upon the workers' republic and the definite defeat of all counter-revolutionary movements within the country, Soviet Russia will inevitably abandon the policy of terror and suppression, and settle down to the constructive tasks of building up her economic and cultural systems. This task will enlist the wholehearted support of the Russian Socialists of all shades and lead to co-operation in practical work.

Similarly, the resumption of active revolutionary struggles in the countries of the West may be expected to re-unite the Socialist factions in those countries, and union at home will infallibly lead to international union.

After the dissolution of the First International it took about fifteen years to prepare the ground for the creation of the Second. But events move much faster in our agitated times. The revival of the Socialist International may be nearer than outward appearances indicate.

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